MAID MARIAN

ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

F. H. TOWNSEND

MAID MARIAN

AND

CROTCHET CASTLE

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Maid Marian, of Sherwood Forest. P. 84.

MAID MARIAN

AND

CROTCHET CASTLE

BY

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

ILLUSTRATED

BY

F. H. TOWNSEND

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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INTRODUCTION

DURING many years' reading, with ever fresh enjoyment, of Peacock's novels, I had until quite the other day—indeed until a time later than that at which I undertook the pleasant duty of writing this preface—been unable to understand what special model the author had had before him in these unique performances. Lord Houghton had noticed, and nobody who had any knowledge of the subject was likely to gainsay, the obvious indebtedness of Peacock to the French tale-tellers of the eighteenth century from Anthony Hamilton to Pigault-Lebrun—though, by the way, Lord Houghton's attribution of the *Compère Mathieu* to Pigault-Lebrun was a mistake, or more probably a slip of memory. But in the model which Hamilton set, which Voltaire borrowed, and which others imitated from Voltaire, there was a very great deal which is quite different from Peacock—different not merely in the details (where difference was necessary, considering the time and country of the writers), but in other ways much more important. I had not solved the problem when, some nine years since, I first wrote about Peacock in *Macmillan's Magazine*, and I have not noticed that anybody has ever solved it. But a month or two ago I happened to be reading for a different purpose the old English version of Marmontel's *Contes Moraux*—a book which in the original I had not read since a period

before that at which I 'commenced Peacockian.' And it so happened that one of the first things I hit upon was the phrase 'the beautiful Cephalis' in the English version of *Les Mariages Samnites*.

It would be an insult to any practised reader of Peacock, and will be unnecessary when in a later volume of this series *Headlong Hall* has reappeared, to explain to others how and why the train at once caught fire. 'Cephalis' is not a common name: the adjective attached to it in the two writers alike as a sort of perpetual epithet connects the pair still closer; and though in Peacock the name itself has a special propriety, though in Marmontel it is perfectly general, this, the Englishman being the later writer of the two, does not invalidate, but, on the contrary, strengthens the coincidence.

Nor have I any doubt that these famous *Moral Tales*, which were immensely popular in England exactly at the time when Peacock was a boy and a very young man, give the line between the Hamiltonian-Voltairian *conte* and Peacock. In them the fantastic-sarcastic story is brought more home to the actual society of the day than is the case in Voltaire's own. In them, though Marmontel submitted more than Peacock ever did to the 'philosophical' fads and crazes of his own day, the undercurrent of satirical criticism on these fads is distinctly apparent. In both a slightly (not by any means more than slightly) pagan disposition to blink positive doctrines is made up by a vigorous advocacy of good fellowship and the general moral virtues, which stops a good deal short of the all-pervading depreciation of 'The Patriarch.' In both there is a quasi-romantic touch. And in both, let me add, there is evidence of that latent conservatism which made the *philosophe* Marmontel in his later days a stout reactionary,

and which causes little quivers (very delightful to behold) in English advocates of Progress who try to excuse and belittle at the same moment the senile delinquencies of Peacock.

This, however, is only a curiosity of literature which happens to have come from the accident of studying two authors, both known, but one long neglected, at the same time. It seemed worth mentioning, but need not be further pursued. For there is much more in Peacock, especially for an Englishman, and an Englishman of our day, than his indebtedness to the French *conteurs*, and the main interest of the juxtaposition of them is that it supplies one more of those literary filiations which are the most interesting things in literary study. Nothing comes of nothing; and though there is absolutely no more foolish and useless style of criticism than that which would fain make out that somebody copied somebody else, there is none more sage and more fruitful than that which endeavours to find out what somebody had in his mind, consciously or unconsciously, when he wrote something.

That Thomas Love Peacock, who was born at Weymouth on the 18th of October 1785, and who did not begin novel-writing till he was past thirty, had at any rate the famous French *philosophe* writers of the eighteenth century in his mind when he began to write is not probable, but certain. His father was a London glass-merchant of St. Paul's Churchyard; and it is a little amusing, considering the son's most reprehensible attacks on the Scottish Nation, that he was himself baptized, not at the place of his birth, but at the Scotch Kirk, London Wall. His second name was derived from his mother's family, who seem to have been mostly naval in profession, and counted representatives in those famous days of the English fleet ranging in rank from

Master to Admiral. The Master, Thomas Love, Peacock's maternal grandfather, had a leg shot off in the great battle off Dominica when Rodney brought back victory to the flag of Britain. And with this grandfather (for his father died when he was only three years old) Peacock and his widowed mother had their headquarters from 1788 to the end of the century at Chertsey: where Peacock himself would seem to have begun that worship of 'the genius of the Thames' which never left him.

The history of Peacock's education is peculiar and almost unique. For six years and a half according to his own account—for five according to that of his granddaughter—by both for a period which ended before he was thirteen—he was at a private school at Englefield Green, kept by a certain Mr. Wicks. It is perhaps necessary to impress on the present generation that before the enormous reorganisation of public and 'grammar' schools and their endowments which the last fifty, and especially the last thirty, years have seen, the private school occupied a much higher place than it has done since. But it is tolerably certain that at no time could any school communicate to a boy between seven and thirteen such a grounding of scholarly acquirement, in tongues both ancient and modern, as Peacock possessed, unless the boy was himself an extremely exceptional person. It appears quite certain that from this mature age of thirteen Peacock never had any pastor or master at all; and it is equally certain that however he may have missed some niceties of scholarship (he certainly had a bad habit of writing his Greek without accents), he was in point of metric and of archæology generally no mean scholar in the strictest sense, while he was altogether exceptionally well read in Greek, Latin, Italian, and French. It is possible that like many irregularly educated men he

gave himself some airs, and was a little paradoxical in his display of classical lore. I own that I am quite unable to share his admiration for Nonnus, though, to give that Panopolitan his last chance, I once took him with me on a solitary holiday as sole literature. And it is certain that he indulged in many foolish and hurtful gibes at the Universities, forgetful that though a fox with his tail on may gracefully dwell on the superfluity of that implement, a fox with his tail off had very much better not do so. But he did know classical literature and modern, as far as Italian and French are concerned (Italian in all the great authors, French chiefly in those of the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries), as very few men of his own day and, I fear, still fewer now knew or know them. He was in fact soaked in all these; their matter was to him what hardly anything can be said to be to men of letters of our own day. He had it all at his fingers' ends, thought in it, adjusted it to everything that he did, read, and wrote of. He might really have been made Doctor of Letters—a degree at which, however, I very much fear he would have scoffed.

We do not know what happened between his leaving school at thirteen and his leaving Chertsey with his mother for London three years later; and, indeed, our knowledge of no part of his life can be said to be very full. He began to read at the British Museum as soon as he got to London, and in 1804 he began to publish (poetry of course) with Hookham, his life-long friend. Peacock's verse, it is universally allowed, may be divided into two parts—the poems which he published independently, and the songs in his novels. Although it would be false and uncritical to say that the two might have been written by two different persons, the difference of character and merit between them is extraordinary. The best of the novel

pieces—and nearly all of these are of the best—defy improvement and securely challenge competition. No Englishman has ever written such drinking songs as Peacock's drinking songs, not merely of the thick-headedly or furiously jovial, but of the higher kind. No man who has written three such pieces in three such different styles as 'The War-Song of Dinas Vawr' in *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, 'The Pool of the Diving Friar' in *Crotchet Castle*, and 'Love and Age' in *Gryll Grange*, need fear to hold up his head in any session of the poets. But the mass of his poetical work is emphatically minor—emphatically of the same kind which the reviewer meets in scores of volumes—generally worse, sometimes as good, very seldom better—every year now, which is sometimes wildly extolled, sometimes made the subject of cheap sarcasm, generally ignored. As almost invariably happens in such cases, the occasional things are often good. Of the more serious attempts, the chief of which are *Rhododaphne* and *The Genius of the Thames*, it is impossible to say more than that they are estimable, and show that the poet had his ears open and his tongue not tied.

After five or six years in London, Peacock seems to have retired once more to Chertsey, and there he fell in love; which love being crossed by some malign agency, the young lady married somebody else and shortly died. She was never forgotten by Peacock, whose best serious verses except 'Love and Age'—those on 'Revisiting Newark Abbey'—she inspired five-and-thirty years later, while he is said to have dreamt of her just before his death after nearly five-and-twenty more. His pecuniary circumstances are not accurately known, but from the history of his life up to this point it would appear that he had some small independence, as he was bred to no profession. Now,

however, either to relieve his disappointment, or for some other reason, he undertook the rather unexpected duty (suggested, it may be supposed, by his ancestral connections with the navy) of an under-secretaryship to Admiral Sir Home Popham on board the *Venerable*. But he did not like it at all, and seems to have held the appointment but a few months. Solitary pedestrian tours and poetry (*The Genius of the Thames* appeared in 1810) now occupied him chiefly. On one of his walks in Wales he met his future wife, Miss Griffith, and on another the Shelleys—a meeting which resulted in his becoming Shelley's intimate friend, his executor, and—though the statement seems to annoy some fanatics—his best and most trustworthy contemporary biographer by far, albeit the biography is only scrappy and partly in the form of fiction. His headquarters seem still to have been Chertsey, and he did a great deal of miscellaneous literary work—of the kind called hack-work when a man does it because he is obliged. Peacock apparently did it for his amusement, composing dramas (he was always fond of the stage) which were never acted, and are said not to have deserved acting, translating French novels, and executing newspaper work of various kinds.

An end was put to this dissipation of his powers, or to this period of maturing them, whichever phrase be preferred, by the appearance in 1816 of *Headlong Hall*, the first of his characteristic performances in fiction; and though by no means the best, a fully sufficient indication of the new and original talent which had been added to English literature. He was now living at Marlow (he was the cause of the Shelleys coming there), and for three or four years his pen was distinctly active, *Melincourt* following *Headlong Hall* in 1817, while the next year saw the delightful whimsy of *Nightmare Abbey* in prose, and

Rhododaphne, Peacock's most elaborate and last formal attempt in verse, as well as the odd and not uninteresting *Ballad of Sir Hornbook*.

The incident which changed Peacock's career and fortunes in 1819 will probably serve, as long as there are men of letters, as a basis for the unavailing wish that the directors of the East India Company in that year could have been taken and cut into little stars and made to rain good influence from the firmament for ever. Nothing to the merely average or business man, who dispenses patronage as a director or a minister, could seem less of a testimonial for a clerkship in a public or semi-public office, than the absence of any regular education or professional training, the pursuance up to nearly 'the middle of the road' of a perfectly idle life, and the production of three novels, instinct with mischievous cynicism, and a handful of verse. Yet we are authoritatively informed that these and no others were the qualifications which, apparently without even his own application, procured for Peacock the offer of a post which in a very short time brought him in £800 a year, and ultimately £2500, with heavy gratuities at different times, and a very large pension after (it is true) very long and very good service.

For the Company had beyond question as good a bargain in Peacock as Peacock had good luck in being selected by the Company. His duties appear to have been multifarious, if not oppressive, and sometimes of a very important nature,—as when, the old naval blood coming out in him, he on the one side brought about steam navigation to India, and on the other started flotillas of heavily-armed gunboats with light draught for river service in the East. His work and some domestic troubles (for he had married after obtaining his clerkship, and his wife soon

became a confirmed invalid) seem for many years to have checked his literary exercises; perhaps also his peculiar style was thought ill suited to an official; but he by no means gave novel-writing up either suddenly or entirely. *Maid Marian* came out in 1822, and was very popular both in itself and as the basis of Planché's operetta with Bishop's music. It was immediately after this that Peacock took the cottage at Halliford, which was his chief, and latterly his only home. But seven years passed before *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (which is read by some with a keener pleasure than anything else of his) appeared in 1829; and though this relapse was followed in 1831 by another in *Crotchet Castle*, which opens the present series with *Maid Marian*, and is by general consent the completest and urbanest product of the author's genius, more than twenty years passed after this without anything of consequence appearing from him, and nearly thirty before his last novel, *Gryll Grange*, came (in 1860) to show such a maintenance of power, of a kind seldom preserved in age, as hardly any other writer of seventy-five has exhibited. For some years before this later date Peacock had been a contributor of articles (but a few of which have as yet been reprinted) to *Fraser's Magazine*, and it was there that *Gryll Grange* first appeared. He died on the 23rd of January 1866.

Although of late years diligent attempts have been made to increase the rather scanty store of direct personal knowledge about Peacock, it cannot be said that they have been very successful; nor is this surprising. He died nearly thirty years ago, a very old man, who had for many years lived in almost complete retirement; he had at no time been given to miscellaneous society, and he had a dislike to writing letters. Almost his only constant

correspondent was Lord Broughton (better known as Byron's friend Hobhouse), and his letters to Lord Broughton are sealed up for another half-dozen years with the rest of the Broughton correspondence. Even at the time when he mixed in the Shelley circle—which, whatever its merits or demerits, cannot be accused of a churlish refusal to take posterity into its confidence—the references to Peacock by Hogg, Leigh Hunt, and others are not numerous, and give us the idea of a man who was not given to 'communicate himself,' as the French say. That he was a pretty boy, a handsome youth, and a man both in middle and old age of extremely striking presence, all agree, and the portraits confirm it. That his hair 'grew all from the top of his head,' as his granddaughter says, was peculiar rather to his generation than to him—this 'tously' growth, the reaction from generations of shaven polls and wigs or queues, being traceable in all portraits of the period from those of Lockhart, the great exemplar of the style, to Thackeray's sketches of his handsome young men in the forties. It would seem that he had a rather irascible temper, but was in most respects an 'Epicurean animal,' as the poet has it, as little indifferent to creature comforts as we should expect from his books, kind rather because the pleasure of others is a pleasure and the pain of others a pain than from pure unselfishness, certainly not indifferent to the *honestum*, but very distinctly preferring the *dulce* to the *utile* (which latter he ranked the lowest of all), and a little careless of abstract truths.

Such a character, if we add to it an extraordinarily keen faculty of humorous and ironic observation and expression, a youth of learned and varied leisure, wide reading, and latterly no small experience in practical affairs, is quite sufficiently comprehensible in the author of the novels; and

the interest of these latter is certainly not by any means diminished either in quality or quantity by the fact that a little—nay, that a good deal—remains unexplained in Peacock. We know his tastes well, but we are left considerably in the dark as to his opinions, not merely in politics, where Lord Houghton, no obtuse inquirer, complained of 'obscurity,' but in regard to almost all the greater subjects and many lesser ones. Albany Fonblanque certainly did not justify what some people are inclined to think a vastly overrated reputation for intellectual alertness by attempting what Dr. Garnett, a sympathiser with Fonblanque here, calls an apology for the satirist, 'from the Liberal point of view certainly not superfluous.' It may perhaps be permitted to doubt whether Peacock had any definite opinions of the reasoned and closely connected kind, and that he was at any time a 'Liberal' is from his earliest novels, as from his latest, unbelievable. A man of his type always laughs at the most prevailing and, therefore, the most irritating absurdities of his day. When Peacock first wrote, these follies were still, though they were ceasing to be, on the side of Toryism and opposition to Progress. By the time of *Crotchet Castle* they were mainly, by the time of *Gryll Grange* almost entirely, on the other side—on the side of Progress itself. The battery had not shifted its position, but the battalions that exposed themselves to its fire were different. And it must seem a little curious that while some reactionaries are quite ungalled by its earlier discharges, considerable discomfort should be exhibited by those of different opinion at the execution effected by the later. Nobody who cannot stand raillery in respect of his own private opinions can expect thoroughly to enjoy Peacock; but it is surprising that any one's opinions should be so tender as to shrink from him.

Most of what has to be said as to the contents and character of Peacock's novels will find most appropriate place in prefatory observations to the respective novels themselves; but some general remarks on the character which pervades them all may be fitly given here. The remarks made above as to Peacock's relations to Marmontel, and the French tale-tellers generally, will have prepared the reader who is a newcomer for the general class of novel which he is here to expect. It is not in strictness either a novel or a *nouvelle*, either a romance or a *roman*; it is most properly and strictly a 'tale' in the sense which that English word only indicates in common with numerous other senses, but which is distinctly and definitely designated by the French *conte*. There is in all the books, or at least in all but *Headlong Hall* (which can hardly be said to have any), some kind of a story; but it is a story of the very simplest kind, and so destitute of complicated plot that some have been in the habit of denying Peacock plot at all, which is excessive. It is mostly very short; and the two exceptions, *Melincourt* and *Gryll Grange*, cannot be said to be long. It has for the most part (for the exceptions here, *Maid Marian* and *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, are rather apparent and accidental than essential and real) a single stage and almost a single scene with a few excursions—to wit, a country house in which a party of more or less representative and pretty generally eccentric persons are assembled. The obligatory love-interest is never neglected, but it can hardly be said ever to constitute great part of the appeal, and is, as a rule, made subservient to the general ironic intent.

As for the characters, they begin by being almost purely representative and almost allegorical, except that they have the lively personality which allegorical figures seldom, save

in the hands of Bunyan, attain. Some of them are used to symbolise—and to be bombarded with the author's wit as substitutes for—prominent personages in politics or literature whom he disliked. The Lake Poets—of whom, as is obvious from the very manner of attack, he can have had no personal knowledge, but whom he disliked partly as political deserters and partly as literary enemies of his own friends—do a great deal of severe duty in this respect in the first three novels, and are not entirely spared till the last of all; while Canning and other Tory chiefs receive in the earlier the attacks which Lord Brougham, Lord John Russell, and other Liberals have to bear in the later. Occasionally, but very rarely, as in the Scythrop of *Nightmare Abbey*, Peacock transforms a fanciful caricature of an actual person (in this case Shelley) into a lifelike and abiding creation; twice, in the Brother Michael of *Maid Marian* and the Seithenyn of *Elphin*, he makes fantastic personages of the highest merit; once at least, in the Dr. Folliott of *Crotchet Castle*, he draws a real and possible figure of his own time with extraordinary *verve* and success.

At the other and worse end of the scale he is rather fond of bringing in doleful creatures with nicknames, who are, as it were, mere labelled dummies, set up to receive shots at their various fads and follies. But the majority of his characters stand between these extremes, and if seldom reaching the highest level of fictitious reality, have a tolerably firm footing upon a level a little lower, and do their work, especially in conversation, excellently.

Conversation, indeed, is one of Peacock's very strongest points. At first he was rather too apt to bolster it out with elaborate dissertations, which, though written with too much liveliness to be dull to any instructed taste, were doubtfully in keeping, and sure to annoy and perplex a

large number of readers. But by the date of even the earliest novel contained in the present volume he had shaken this off, and attained a style of piquant talk, with the irony and the epigram never over-done, but always present, which stands almost by itself in English, and helps more than anything else to communicate to his novels the singular relish which they have for certain palates. This style extends to the narrative part and framework of the novels as well, while these also contain some set passages of description, etc., which have very high merit as examples of the older-fashioned—but not, I hope, even yet, old-fashioned—style of proportion and order, as yet untouched by the neo-classicism of Landor, the exuberance of De Quincey and Wilson, the daring innovations of Carlyle, and the word-painting of Mr. Ruskin.

One of the chief attractions remains to be mentioned, though it has been alluded to. This is the interspersing of the prose with a considerable quantity of almost always good, and sometimes extraordinarily original and brilliant, verse in the forms of drinking songs, ballads, epigrams, casual snatches and catches, pieces of sentiment, and occasional verse in very great variety.

The general idea which all these means are employed to illustrate and enforce cannot be better put than in the motto of the novel with which, somewhat out of chronological order, but with advantages of other kinds to compensate, we open this issue of Peacock—

> 'Le monde est plein de fous, et qui n'en veut pas voir
> Doit se tenir tout seul, et casser son miroir.'

It is a point of view to which the brighter kind of wits takes very readily; but when the point of view is translated into a point of action and production, a 'basis of opera-

tions,' then these wits are put to their mettle. Nothing more dubious and ephemeral than second-rate, nothing more insipid and intolerable than third-rate or lower satire of humanity puts in an appearance among the kinds of literature. Nothing more absolutely sure of survival and of constant reception by the fittest exists than the first-rate variety of such satire. It would be too much to say—it would be a piece of that fulsome assentation which only mistaken opinion expects from editors and introducers—that Peacock always attains to this first rank. He does not ; and his oscillation between that rank and a lower one may be set down as due partly to a certain indolence—a defect in the highest union of capacity and endeavour—partly to the eccentricity of his education and career. But he is sometimes at almost the highest level, and with the rarest exceptions he is never very far below it. From the temptation of 'pot-boiling,' which is never so fatal as in this kind of work, he was at all times removed by fortune ; and his extreme fastidiousness saved him from the rarer and more incomprehensible fault of those who, having no temptation to write at all, have written too much. Some special traps into which he fell will be noticed in the following and in other pages. But on the whole, his appeal to those who see 'the humour of it,' to whom (slightly to alter his own words) 'nothing is too good to be laughed at, and few things so bad that they may not be laughed at' from certain points of view, is strong and almost unique. It has been, or might have been, said that the highest possible compliment is the phrase '*He's* no fool,' with an italic stress on the 'he,' which we sometimes speak and hear. There are few pages of Peacock at the foot of which this might not be written as a criticism, with the little touch of reflected self-congratulation at perceiving

the absence of folly, which, perhaps, gives the phrase some of its zest. And are there very many writers of the nineteenth or any century on whose pages, even to give ourselves this titillation, we could write as much?

The two novels with which this issue of Peacock's work in fiction opens, though neither the first in order nor the longest, are perhaps those which 'divide the least' (as a famous phrase has it) the admirers of the author. *Nightmare Abbey* has for some a more piquant flavour of sustained Rabelaisian farce which attains to true comedy; *The Misfortunes of Elphin* must always carry the suffrages of those who appreciate intense ironic presentation of mankind; and *Gryll Grange* has a more extensive and varied interest, a fresher modernity of subject, a milder and more mellow presentation of Peacock's view of life. But the first of these has still some crudity of method; the second, like the *Tale of a Tub* and *Jonathan Wild* (the captains of the company in which it is so admirable a lieutenant), shocks and disgusts some tastes by its austerity; and the third annoys many estimable persons by its irreverent satire of things which they have been brought up to respect. In all these ways no work of Peacock's can be exactly *pain bénit* to weak brethren. But the two which we now re-edit exhibit fewer stumbling-blocks to weak knees, fewer chokepears to difficult swallows, than any of the others. *Crotchet Castle* is very frequently, and perhaps not erroneously, taken to be, all things considered, Peacock's most perfect work in his special vocation of modern satirist; *Maid Marian* is certainly his most charming essay in handling ancient themes.

The scheme which, as has been said, gives a common form to all Peacock's novels, except *Maid Marian* and *Elphin*, appears at perhaps its best in *Crotchet Castle*.

This scheme is a sufficiently simple one, though the originality of it is shown by the fact that nobody had exactly hit on it before, and the success of it by the fact that many people have more or less exactly followed it since. A company of folk representing partly general characteristics of mankind, partly special fads and crazes of the day, assemble in a country house and play each other off by provocation and competition. This playing off is assisted throughout the novels by the orthodox romantic interest of love-making—very faint in *Headlong Hall;* enhanced in *Melincourt*, after an old-fashioned kind, by rivalry and abduction; enlivened in *Nightmare Abbey* by a Germanic, or, as we should say now, Ibsenic outlining of a 'double arrangement'; and much later extended to something like an ordinary novel plot in *Gryll Grange.* Here in *Crotchet Castle* the old love-or-money problem is brought in to perform this office; and it is illustrated in a criss-cross fashion by the suit of Captain Fitzchrome to Lady Clarinda, and the reparation made by Mr. Chainmail to the willow-wearing damsel, Susannah Touchandgo.

But Peacock, little as he cared for plot, was not (at least after *Headlong Hall*, where it appears chiefly in embryo) satisfied with this, and was wont to bring in a more or less independent appeal of some sort or sorts, which is provided in *Melincourt* by the Oran Haut-ton business and the journey to One-Vote; in *Nightmare Abbey*, short as it is, by the intervention of Mr. Cypress; and in *Gryll Grange* by the Aristophanic Comedy. Here the canal voyage to North Wales does most of this business.

In the present book, however, and in *Gryll Grange*, he has added yet a *third* ingredient, which unquestionably adds not a little to the flavour of the whole. In the earlier books he had only indicated his own opinion, or, without

exactly indicating it, had criticised his characters by direct remarks in text or note, which were sometimes a little inartistic, and always a little inurbane. In this book (and he followed the practice up through the personages of Dr. Opimian and Mr. MacBorrowdale in *Gryll Grange*) he has provided much more interesting choruses, so to speak, in Lady Clarinda and Dr. Folliott, expressing partly the author's own sentiments (which are not always quite judicial), and partly what may be called the common sense of impartial mankind. This latter gift is Lady Clarinda's peculiar excellence. It may perhaps be thought that in this lies the special value of the book; and it is certainly in this point that Peacock's followers have mostly failed. They have either forgotten the necessity of such personages, or they have attempted them maladroitly.

There are several minor beauties in *Crotchet Castle* which never fail to strike an accustomed reader. For instance, there is a sentence not far from the beginning of Chapter X. which shows how much Peacock had learnt. He says, speaking of the word-combats of Mr. Mac Quedy and Dr. Folliott, 'We would print these dialogues if we thought any one would read them; but the world is not yet ripe.' He *had* printed them in *Headlong Hall* and *Melincourt*, with the result of nearly swamping the first book, and in some judgments, though not in mine, quite swamping the second. He now knew better.

The singular prejudices, of which something has been said already, and more will have to be said later, are not, indeed, quite put to rest in *Crotchet Castle*. The discreditable and almost unintelligible illiberality towards the Lake Triad is much softened in the portraiture of Mr. Skionar (Coleridge), but reappears in a flash of spite at 'his friends Mr. Wilful Wontsee (Wordsworth) and Mr. Rumblesack

Shantsee (Southey).' The Scotch, or rather anti-Scotch, craze manifests itself in the attack on the *Edinburgh* instead of the *Quarterly*, in the outrageous and only partly humorous depreciation of Scott. Paper money as such is still a sore point with Peacock, and he cannot refrain from noting that the party 'found nobody reading' at Oxford (in July!). But, on the whole, there is a distinct improvement in these respects; while the book can scarcely, especially when we consider the lively attacks on Brougham and the 'diffusion of knowledge' people, be said to lack pungency. It is, in fact, in this meeting of the ways, in the discarding of a personality which went near to bad taste, and the acquisition of an equity which is never merely insipid, that the charm of the work consists.

It has, moreover, the general Peacockian attractions of character, dialogue, and interspersed verse in nearly, if not in quite, the highest degree. Dr. Folliott would probably hold the top of the poll in a ballot of Peacock's admirers for his best character, and I should split what votes I might have on the cumulative system for Lady Clarinda to accompany him. Slightly as she is painted, there are few better outline portraits of one of the most charming types of women. Miss Touchandgo, though a little too 'sensible' in the eighteenth century sense, is a great advance on Anthelia in *Melincourt*, and for her date not inferior to Miss Niphet in *Gryll Grange*. The rapid succession of the different scenes and the brisk rapier-play of the conversation cannot be surpassed anywhere even in Peacock, who had now thoroughly acquired practice in it, and who seems, on the point of dropping literature altogether for twenty, and prose fiction for thirty, years, to have mustered his whole skill for the occasion.

And some of the verses are sublime. 'The Pool of the

Diving Friar' is not so much of a comparative favourite with me as it is with some people; but its positive merit is beyond dispute. The satire on Brougham (not included in the first edition) is good, but not first-rate, and the versions of old *fabliaux* do not please me very much either as versions, or in themselves. Peacock, with all his originality, could not get out of the eighteenth-century habit of 'namby-pambyfying' the Middle Ages as soon as he left off simply abusing them. But

'If I drink water while this doth last'

is perfection; and it is a strange addition to its interest that it was a swan-song. Peacock, I trust, and indeed partly know, drank good wine for nearly forty years more. He celebrated it in prose. But he never sang it again. The days of melodious conviviality were even then approaching their close.

The attractions of *Maid Marian* are different, but certainly not inferior. Peacock was a younger and probably a merrier man when he wrote it; and though his own crotchets were in a less mellow condition than when he built the Castle of that same, it so happened that the scheme of the story gave comparatively little opportunity for questionable indulgence in them. He must needs have a fling at a servile and immoral Laureate in Harpiton, but it is the merest of flings. On the other hand, the delightful story which has inspired so many writers from the unknown ballad-mongers to Lord Tennyson, and which by an odd though not uncommon coincidence was furnishing a subject to Sir Walter Scott at the very same time (for *Ivanhoe* and *Maid Marian* are independent contemporaries), has never been interpreted with more zest and freshness than here. Nor could it perhaps have been anticipated that a mediæval

story could be told by an extremely modern satirist with such a happy blending of irony and romance. But the fact is that for all his Voltairian tone and all his classical taste there was a very strong romantic vein in Peacock from first to last.

It is well known that Planché and Bishop—the former with complimentary expressions, but without 'with your leave or by your leave,' and in a manner which might have brought him into trouble with the law, turned *Maid Marian* into a comic opera which was extraordinarily popular, and made many of the delightful snatches of verse which the novel contained familiar in the mouths of singing men and women. The liberty was to a certain extent atoned for by a reflected popularity for the novel itself, and *Maid Marian* might probably have been found a generation ago in many libraries (as my own childish recollection enables me to say that it certainly was in one) which contained no other work of the author's. Peacock did not resent the proceeding, though his publisher was rather inclined to do so; indeed, like other disappointed playwrights in history or fiction, he was probably too delighted to appear on the boards at last to quarrel much with the manner of his appearance or the distribution of the profits thereof.

These songs are indeed among the most charming of their kind, and they possess a quality of 'snatch' and unforced, natural, ballad-like lyrical movement, which even Scott himself never in the lighter way far surpassed, and which the very greatest poets of the day, Shelley, Coleridge, Keats, did not hit often. This quality appears at once in

'The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble,'

which is said to have been the great hit of the opera; and it is well maintained in the graceless fragment beginning

'The rose.' The 'Ballad of Kingslea Mere' any one might have written, hardly so the exquisite pair of stanzas which close the second chapter, and are for meaning and music combined Peacock's best work in verse, which is neither merely Anacreontic nor distinctly sentimental. The scraps of song by which Matilda and the Friar arouse (I own I think not unjustly) the baron's wrath have more of that prepared impromptu style which the comic opera itself depends upon, and almost necessitates; but

'A staff, a staff, of the young oak-graff'

(which was once pleasingly varied from oral recitation

'A staff, a staff, for the young *O'Graff*')

rises much higher. 'O bold Robin Hood' has obtained a wider and more durable fame than even the 'Bramble,' and the three songs that turn in different ways on the cry of 'Over! Over!' and its revelation of Brother Michael's peccadillo have still greater verbal, if less musical, merit. Nor is the finale, though in eighteenth-century conventional style, to be despised either on that score or on its own merits.

And the prose is quite worthy of the verse. The gradual clearing and fining of Peacock's style which is noticeable in his successive novels had come almost to perfection (it did not, I think, quite reach that point till *The Misfortunes of Elphin*) in *Maid Marian*. We shall not find the crisp, quaint, and yet not in the least affected phrase of such a passage as—'I am very much obliged to you, sir,' said the baron, 'very exceedingly obliged. Your solicitude for my daughter is truly paternal; and for a young man and a stranger very singular and exemplary. And it is very kind, withal, to come to the relief of my

inefficiency and inexperience, and concern yourself so much in that which concerns you not';—we shall not find it at all, or hardly at all, before *Nightmare Abbey*, and not with a quite certain sound in *Nightmare Abbey* itself. Also in less technical points than these of style *Maid Marian* shows immense improvement. There are no otiose characters like Mr. Asterias in *Nightmare Abbey*, like one or two even in *Crotchet Castle;* there is little digression and haranguing; the incidents of the legend are neither lugged in with too ceremonious fidelity nor omitted and altered with too cavalier license. The whole moves with the nimblest and most agreeable combination of conversational and narrative 'business.' And always in the midst of the movement is the admirable figure of Brother Michael, perhaps the very best presentment of the 'Goliardic' friar whom the Middle Age loved and the Renaissance in its very satire did not wholly hate. If only those three ghostly friars—Brother Michael, his double the Clerk of Copmanhurst, and their spiritual father in Rabelais—could meet together! It is delightful but almost terrible to think of the cracking of bottles, of jests, and of crowns that would celebrate that symposium.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

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MAID MARIAN

First published in 1822

'Yet thanks I must you con, that you work not
In holier shapes : for there is boundless theft
In limited professions.'

Timon of Athens.

CHAPTER I

'Now come ye for peace here, or come ye for war?'
SCOTT.

'THE abbot, in his alb arrayed,' stood at the altar in the abbey-chapel of Rubygill, with all his plump, sleek, rosy friars, in goodly lines disposed, to solemnise the nuptials of the beautiful Matilda Fitzwater, daughter of the Baron of Arlingford, with the noble Robert Fitz-Ooth, Earl of Locksley and Huntingdon. The abbey of Rubygill stood in a picturesque valley, at a little distance from the western boundary of Sherwood Forest, in a spot which seemed adapted by nature to be the retreat of monastic mortification, being on the banks of a fine trout-stream, and in the midst of woodland coverts, abounding with excellent game. The bride, with her father and attendant maidens, entered the chapel; but the earl had not arrived. The baron was amazed, and the bridemaidens were disconcerted. Matilda feared that some evil had befallen her lover, but felt no diminution of her confidence in his honour and love. Through the open gates of the chapel she looked down the narrow road that wound along the side of the hill; and her ear was the first that heard the distant trampling of horses, and her eye was the first that caught the glitter of snowy plumes, and the light of polished spears. 'It is strange,' thought the baron, 'that the earl should come in this martial array to his wedding'; but he had not long to meditate on the phenomenon, for the foaming steeds swept up to the gate like a whirlwind, and the earl, breathless with speed, and followed by a few of his yeomen, advanced to his smiling bride. It was then no time to ask questions, for the organ was in full peal, and the choristers were in full voice.

The abbot began to intone the ceremony in a style of modulation impressively exalted, his voice issuing most canonically from the roof of his mouth, through the medium of a very musical nose newly tuned for the occasion. But he had not proceeded far enough to exhibit all the variety and compass of this melodious instrument, when a noise was heard at the gate, and a party of armed men entered the chapel. The song of the choristers died away in a shake of demisemiquavers, contrary to all the rules of psalmody. The organ-blower, who was working his musical air-pump with one hand, and with two fingers and a thumb of the other insinuating a peeping-place through the curtain of the organ-gallery, was struck motionless by the double operation of curiosity and fear; while the organist, intent only on his performance, and spreading all his fingers to strike a swell of magnificent chords, felt his harmonic spirit ready to desert his body on being answered by the ghastly rattle of empty keys, and in the consequent *agitato furioso* of the internal movements of his feelings, was preparing to restore harmony by the *segue subito* of an *appoggiatura con foco* with the corner of a book of anthems on the head of his neglectful assistant, when his hand and his attention together were arrested by the scene below. The voice of the abbot subsided into silence through a descending scale of long-drawn melody, like the sound of the ebbing sea to the explorers of a cave. In a few moments all was silence, interrupted only by the iron tread of the armed intruders, as it rang on the marble floor and echoed from the vaulted aisles.

The leader strode up to the altar; and placing himself opposite to the abbot, and between the earl and Matilda, in such a manner that the four together seemed to stand on the four points of a diamond, exclaimed, 'In the name of King Henry, I forbid the ceremony, and attach Robert, Earl of Huntingdon[1] as a traitor!' and at the same time he held his drawn sword between the lovers, as if to emblem that royal authority which laid its temporal ban upon their contract. The earl drew his own sword instantly, and struck down the interposing weapon; then clasped his left arm round Matilda, who sprang into his embrace, and held his sword before her

[1] The real Earl of Huntingdon at this period was David, brother of William, King of Scotland.—G.

with his right hand. His yeomen ranged themselves at his side, and stood with their swords drawn, still and prepared, like men determined to die in his defence. The soldiers, confident in superiority of numbers, paused. The abbot took advantage of the pause to introduce a word of exhortation. 'My children,' said he, 'if you are going to cut each other's throats, I entreat you, in the name of peace and charity, to do it out of the chapel.'

'Sweet Matilda,' said the earl, 'did you give your love to the Earl of Huntingdon, whose lands touch the Ouse and the Trent, or to Robert Fitz-Ooth,[1] the son of his mother?'

'Neither to the earl nor his earldom,' answered Matilda, firmly, 'but to Robert Fitz-Ooth and his love.'

'That I well knew,' said the earl; 'and though the ceremony be incomplete, we are not the less married in the eye of my only saint, our Lady, who will yet bring us together. Lord Fitzwater, to your care, for the present, I commit your daughter. Nay, sweet Matilda, part we must for a while; but we will soon meet under brighter skies, and be this the seal of our faith.'

He kissed Matilda's lips, and consigned her to the baron, who glowered about him with an expression of countenance that showed he was mortally wroth with somebody; but whatever he thought or felt he kept to himself. The earl, with a sign to his followers, made a sudden charge on the soldiers, with the intention of cutting his way through. The soldiers were prepared for such an occurrence, and a desperate skirmish succeeded. Some of the women screamed, but none of them fainted; for fainting was not so much the fashion in those days, when the ladies breakfasted on brawn and ale at sunrise, as in our more refined age of green tea and muffins at noon. Matilda seemed disposed to fly again to her lover, but the baron forced her from the chapel. The earl's bowmen at the door sent in among the assailants a volley of arrows, one of which whizzed past the ear of the abbot, who, in mortal fear of being suddenly translated from a ghostly friar into a friarly ghost, began to roll out of the chapel as fast as his bulk and his holy robes would permit, roaring 'Sacrilege!' with all his monks at his heels, who were, like himself, more intent to go

[1] Stukely's pedigree deducing the descent of Robin Hood from Fitz-Ooth, a companion of the Conqueror, is dismissed by the *Dictionary of National Biography* as 'absurd.'—G.

at once than to stand upon the order of their going. The abbot, thus pressed from behind, and stumbling over his own drapery before, fell suddenly prostrate in the doorway that connected the chapel with the abbey, and was instantaneously buried under a pyramid of ghostly carcasses, that fell over him and each other, and lay a rolling chaos of animated rotundities, sprawling and bawling in unseemly disarray, and sending forth the names of all the saints in and out of heaven, amidst the clashing of swords, the ringing of bucklers, the clattering of helmets, the twanging of bow-strings, the whizzing of arrows, the screams of women, the shouts of the warriors, and the vociferations of the peasantry, who had been assembled to the intended nuptials, and who, seeing a fair set-to, contrived to pick a quarrel among themselves on the occasion, and proceeded, with staff and cudgel, to crack each other's skulls for the good of the king and the earl. One tall friar alone was untouched by the panic of his brethren, and stood steadfastly watching the combat with his arms akimbo, the colossal emblem of an unarmed neutrality.

At length, through the midst of the internal confusion, the earl, by the help of his good sword, the staunch valour of his men, and the blessing of the Virgin, fought his way to the chapel-gate—his bowmen closed him in—he vaulted into his saddle, clapped spurs to his horse, rallied his men on the first eminence, and changed his sword for a bow and arrow, with which he did old execution among the pursuers, who at last thought it most expedient to desist from offensive warfare, and to retreat into the abbey, where, in the king's name, they broached a pipe of the best wine, and attached all the venison in the larder, having first carefully unpacked the tuft of friars, and set the fallen abbot on his legs.

The friars, it may be well supposed, and such of the king's men as escaped unhurt from the affray, found their spirits a cup too low, and kept the flask moving from noon till night. The peaceful brethren, unused to the tumult of war, had undergone, from fear and discomposure, an exhaustion of animal spirits that required extraordinary refection. During the repast, they interrogated Sir Ralph Montfaucon, the leader of the soldiers, respecting the nature of the earl's offence.

'A complication of offences,' replied Sir Ralph, 'superinduced on the original basis of forest-treason. He began with

'A rolling chaos of animated rotundities.'

hunting the king's deer, in despite of all remonstrance ; followed it up by contempt of the king's mandates, and by armed resistance to his power, in defiance of all authority ; and combined with it the resolute withholding of payment of certain moneys to the Abbot of Doncaster, in denial of all law ; and has thus made himself the declared enemy of church and state, and all for being too fond of venison.' And the knight helped himself to half a pasty.

'A heinous offender,' said a little round oily friar, appropriating the portion of pasty which Sir Ralph had left.

'The earl is a worthy peer,' said the tall friar whom we have already mentioned in the chapel scene, 'and the best marksman in England.'

'Why, this is flat treason, Brother Michael,' said the little round friar, 'to call an attainted traitor a worthy peer.'

'I pledge you,' said Brother Michael. The little friar smiled and filled his cup. 'He will draw the long-bow,' pursued Brother Michael, 'with any bold yeoman among them all.'

'Don't talk of the long-bow,' said the abbot, who had the sound of the arrow still whizzing in his ear : 'what have we pillars of the faith to do with the long-bow ?'

'Be that as it may,' said Sir Ralph, 'he is an outlaw from this moment.'

'So much the worse for the law then,' said Brother Michael. 'The law will have a heavier miss of him than he will have of the law. He will strike as much venison as ever, and more of other game. I know what I say ; but *basta :* Let us drink.'

'What other game ?' said the little friar. 'I hope he won't poach among our partridges.'

'Poach ! not he,' said Brother Michael : 'if he wants your partridges, he will strike them under your nose (here's to you), and drag your trout-stream for you on a Thursday evening.'

'Monstrous ! and starve us on fast-day,' said the little friar.

'But that is not the game I mean,' said Brother Michael.

'Surely, son Michael,' said the abbot, 'you do not mean to insinuate that the noble earl will turn freebooter ?'

'A man must live,' said Brother Michael, 'earl or no. If the law takes his rents and beeves without his consent, he must take beeves and rents where he can get them without the consent of the law. This is the *lex talionis.*'

'Truly,' said Sir Ralph, 'I am sorry for the damsel: she seems fond of this wild runagate.'

'A mad girl, a mad girl,' said the little friar.

'How a mad girl?' said Brother Michael. 'Has she not beauty, grace, wit, sense, discretion, dexterity, learning, and valour?'

'Learning!' exclaimed the little friar; 'what has a woman to do with learning? And valour! who ever heard a woman commended for valour? Meekness, and mildness, and softness, and gentleness, and tenderness, and humility, and obedience to her husband, and faith in her confessor, and domesticity, or, as learned doctors call it, the faculty of stay-at-homeitiveness, and embroidery, and music, and pickling, and preserving, and the whole complex and multiplex detail of the noble science of dinner, as well in preparation for the table, as in arrangement over it, and in distribution around it to knights, and squires, and ghostly friars,—these are female virtues: but valour—why who ever heard——?'

'She is the all in all,' said Brother Michael, 'gentle as a ring-dove, yet high-soaring as a falcon: humble below her deserving, yet deserving beyond the estimate of panegyric: an exact economist in all superfluity, yet a most bountiful dispenser in all liberality: the chief regulator of her household, the fairest pillar of her hall, and the sweetest blossom of her bower: having, in all opposite proposings, sense to understand, judgment to weigh, discretion to choose, firmness to undertake, diligence to conduct, perseverance to accomplish, and resolution to maintain. For obedience to her husband, that is not to be tried till she has one: for faith in her confessor, she has as much as the law prescribes: for embroidery an Arachne: for music a Siren: and for pickling and preserving, did not one of her jars of sugared apricots give you your last surfeit at Arlingford Castle?'

'Call you that preserving?' said the little friar; 'I call it destroying. Call you it pickling? Truly it pickled me. My life was saved by miracle.'

'By canary,' said Brother Michael. 'Canary is the only life preserver, the true *aurum potabile*, the universal panacea for all diseases, thirst, and short life. Your life was saved by canary.'

'Indeed, reverend father,' said Sir Ralph, 'if the young lady be half what you describe, she must be a paragon: but your commending her for valour does somewhat amaze me.'

'She can fence,' said the little friar, 'and draw the long-bow, and play at single-stick and quarter-staff.'

'Yet, mark you,' said Brother Michael, 'not like a virago or a hoyden, or one that would crack a serving-man's head for spilling gravy on her ruff, but with such womanly grace and temperate self-command as if those manly exercises belonged to her only, and were become for her sake feminine.'

'You incite me,' said Sir Ralph, 'to view her more nearly. That madcap earl found me other employment than to remark her in the chapel.'

'The earl is a worthy peer,' said Brother Michael; 'he is worth any fourteen earls on this side Trent, and any seven on the other.' (The reader will please to remember that Ruby-gill Abbey was *north* of Trent.)

'His mettle will be tried,' said Sir Ralph. 'There is many a courtier will swear to King Henry to bring him in dead or alive.'

'They must look to the brambles then,' said Brother Michael.

'The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble,
Doth make a jest
Of silken vest,
That will through greenwood scramble:
The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble.'

'Plague on your lungs, son Michael,' said the abbot; 'this is your old coil: always roaring in your cups.'

'I know what I say,' said Brother Michael; 'there is often more sense in an old song than in a new homily.

The courtly pad doth amble,
When his gay lord would ramble:
But both may catch
An awkward scratch,
If they ride among the bramble:
The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble.'

'Tall friar,' said Sir Ralph, 'either you shoot the shafts of your merriment at random, or you know more of the earl's designs than beseems your frock.'

'Let my frock,' said Brother Michael, 'answer for its own sins. It is worn past covering mine. It is too weak for a shield, too transparent for a screen, too thin for a shelter, too

light for gravity, and too threadbare for a jest. The wearer would be naught indeed who should misbeseem such a wedding garment.

But wherefore does the sheep wear wool?
That he in season sheared may be,
And the shepherd be warm though his flock be cool:
So I'll have a new cloak about me.'

CHAPTER II

'Vray moyne si oncques en feut depuis que le monde moynant moyna de moynerie.'—RABELAIS.

THE Earl of Huntingdon, living in the vicinity of a royal forest, and passionately attached to the chase from his infancy, had long made as free with the king's deer as Lord Percy proposed to do with those of Lord Douglas in the memorable hunting of Cheviot. It is sufficiently well known how severe were the forest-laws in those days, and with what jealousy the kings of England maintained this branch of their prerogative; but menaces and remonstrances were thrown away on the earl, who declared that he would not thank Saint Peter for admission into Paradise, if he were obliged to leave his bow and hounds at the gate. King Henry (the Second) swore by Saint Botolph to make him rue his sport, and, having caused him to be duly and formally accused, summoned him to London to answer the charge. The earl, deeming himself safer among his own vassals than among King Henry's courtiers, took no notice of the mandate. King Henry sent a force to bring him, *vi et armis*, to court. The earl made a resolute resistance, and put the king's force to flight under a shower of arrows, an act which the courtiers declared to be treason. At the same time, the Abbot of Doncaster sued up the payment of certain moneys, which the earl, whose revenue ran a losing race with his hospitality, had borrowed at sundry times of the said abbot: for the abbots and the bishops were the chief usurers of those days, and, as the end sanctifies the means, were not in the least scrupulous of employing what would have been extortion in the profane, to accomplish the pious purpose of bringing a blessing on the land by rescuing it from the frail hold of

carnal and temporal into the firmer grasp of ghostly and spiritual possessors. But the earl, confident in the number and attachment of his retainers, stoutly refused either to repay the money, which he could not, or to yield the forfeiture, which he would not: a refusal which in those days was an act of outlawry in a gentleman, as it is now of bankruptcy in a base mechanic; the gentleman having in our wiser times a more liberal privilege of gentility, which enables him to keep his land and laugh at his creditor. Thus the mutual resentments and interests of the king and the abbot concurred to subject the earl to the penalties of outlawry, by which the abbot would gain his due upon the lands of Locksley, and the rest would be confiscate to the king. Still the king did not think it advisable to assail the earl in his own stronghold, but caused a diligent watch to be kept over his motions, till at length his rumoured marriage with the heiress of Arlingford seemed to point out an easy method of laying violent hands on the offender. Sir Ralph Montfaucon, a young man of good lineage, and of an aspiring temper, who readily seized the first opportunity that offered of recommending himself to King Henry's favour by manifesting his zeal in his service, undertook the charge: and how he succeeded we have seen.

Sir Ralph's curiosity was strongly excited by the friar's description of the young lady of Arlingford; and he prepared in the morning to visit the castle, under the very plausible pretext of giving the baron an explanation of his intervention at the nuptials. Brother Michael and the little fat friar proposed to be his guides. The proposal was courteously accepted, and they set out together, leaving Sir Ralph's followers at the abbey. The knight was mounted on a spirited charger; brother Michael on a large heavy-trotting horse; and the little fat friar on a plump soft-paced Galloway, so correspondent with himself in size, rotundity, and sleekness, that if they had been amalgamated into a centaur, there would have been nothing to alter in their proportions.

'Do you know,' said the little friar, as they wound along the banks of the stream, 'the reason why lake-trout is better than river-trout, and shyer withal?'

'I was not aware of the fact,' said Sir Ralph.

'A most heterodox remark,' said Brother Michael; 'know you not, that in all nice matters you should take the implication

for absolute, and, without looking into the *fact whether*, seek only the *reason why?* But the fact is so, on the word of a friar: which what layman will venture to gainsay who prefers a down bed to a gridiron?'

'The fact being so,' said the knight, 'I am still at a loss for the reason; nor would I undertake to opine in a matter of that magnitude: since, in all that appertains to the good things either of this world or the next, my reverend spiritual guides are kind enough to take the trouble of thinking off my hands.'

'Spoken,' said Brother Michael, 'with a sound Catholic conscience. My little brother here is most profound in the matter of trout. He has marked, learned, and inwardly digested the subject, twice a week at least for five-and-thirty years. I yield to him in this. My strong points are venison and canary.'

'The good qualities of a trout,' said the little friar, 'are firmness and redness: the redness, indeed, being the visible sign of all other virtues.'

'Whence,' said Brother Michael, 'we choose our abbot by his nose:

> The rose on the nose doth all virtues disclose:
> For the outward grace shows
> That the inward overflows,
> When it glows in the rose of a red, red nose.'

'Now,' said the little friar, 'as is the firmness so is the redness, and as is the redness so is the shyness.'

'Marry why?' said Brother Michael. 'The solution is not physical-natural, but physical-historical, or natural-superinductive. And thereby hangs a tale, which may be either said or sung:

> The damsel stood to watch the fight
> By the banks of Kingslea Mere,[1]
> And they brought to her feet her own true knight
> Sore wounded on a bier.
>
> She knelt by him his wounds to bind,
> She washed them with many a tear;
> And shouts rose fast upon the wind,
> Which told that the foe was near.

[1] Probably one of the small meres in Delamere Forest, Cheshire, most of which are now dried up.—G.

"Oh! let not," he said, "while yet I live,
The cruel foe me take;
But with thy sweet lips a last kiss give,
And cast me in the lake."

Around his neck she wound her arms,
And she kissed his lips so pale;
And evermore the war's alarms
Came louder up the vale.

She drew him to the lake's steep side,
Where the red heath fringed the shore;
She plunged with him beneath the tide,
And they were seen no more.

Their true blood mingled in Kingslea Mere,
That to mingle on earth was fain;
And the trout that swims in that crystal clear
Is tinged with the crimson stain.

'Thus you see how good comes of evil, and how a holy friar may fare better on fast-day for the violent death of two lovers two hundred years ago. The inference is most consecutive, that wherever you catch a red-fleshed trout, love lies bleeding under the water: an occult quality, which can only act in the stationary waters of a lake, being neutralised by the rapid transition of those of a stream.'

'And why is the trout shyer for that?' asked Sir Ralph.

'Do you not see?' said Brother Michael. 'The virtues of both lovers diffuse themselves through the lake. The infusion of masculine valour makes the fish active and sanguineous: the infusion of maiden modesty makes him coy and hard to win: and you shall find through life, the fish which is most easily hooked is not the best worth dishing. But yonder are the towers of Arlingford.'

The little friar stopped. He seemed suddenly struck with an awful thought, which caused a momentary pallescence in his rosy complexion; and after a brief hesitation he turned his Galloway, and told his companions he should give them good-day.

'Why, what is in the wind now, Brother Peter?' said Friar Michael.

'The Lady Matilda,' said the little friar, 'can draw the long-bow. She must bear no goodwill to Sir Ralph; and if she

'He spurred up his four-footed better half'

should espy him from her tower, she may testify her recognition with a clothyard shaft. She is not so infallible a markswoman, but that she might shoot at a crow and kill a pigeon. She might peradventure miss the knight, and hit me, who never did her any harm.'

'Tut, tut, man,' said Brother Michael, 'there is no such fear.'

'Mass,' said the little friar, 'but there is such a fear, and very strong too. You who have it not may keep your way, and I who have it shall take mine. I am not just now in the vein for being picked off at a long shot.' And saying these words, he spurred up his four-footed better half, and galloped off as nimbly as if he had had an arrow singing behind him.

'Is this Lady Matilda, then, so very terrible a damsel?' said Sir Ralph to Brother Michael.

'By no means,' said the friar. 'She has certainly a high spirit; but it is the wing of the eagle, without his beak or his claw. She is as gentle as magnanimous; but it is the gentleness of the summer wind, which, however lightly it wave the tuft of the pine, carries with it the intimation of a power, that, if roused to its extremity, could make it bend to the dust.'

'From the warmth of your panegyric, ghostly father,' said the knight, 'I should almost suspect you were in love with the damsel.'

'So I am,' said the friar, 'and I care not who knows it; but all in the way of honesty, master soldier. I am, as it were, her spiritual lover; and were she a damsel errant, I would be her ghostly esquire, her friar militant. I would buckle me in armour of proof, and the devil might thresh me black with an iron flail, before I would knock under in her cause. Though they be not yet one canonically, thanks to your soldiership, the earl is her liege lord, and she is his liege lady. I am her father confessor and ghostly director: I have taken on me to show her the way to the next world; and how can I do that if I lose sight of her in this? seeing that this is but the road to the other, and has so many circumvolutions and ramifications of bye-ways and beaten paths (all more thickly set than the true one with finger-posts and milestones, not one of which tells truth), that a traveller has need of some one who knows the way, or the odds go hard against him that he will ever see the face of Saint Peter.'

'But there must surely be some reason,' said Sir Ralph, 'for Father Peter's apprehension.'

'None,' said Brother Michael, 'but the apprehension itself; fear being its own father, and most prolific in self-propagation. The lady did, it is true, once signalise her displeasure against our little brother, for reprimanding her in that she would go hunting a-mornings instead of attending matins. She cut short the thread of his eloquence by sportively drawing her bow-string and loosing an arrow over his head; he waddled off with singular speed, and was in much awe of her for many months. I thought he had forgotten it: but let that pass. In truth, she would have had little of her lover's company, if she had liked the chaunt of the choristers better than the cry of the hounds; yet I know not; for they were companions from the cradle, and reciprocally fashioned each other to the love of the fern and the foxglove. Had either been less sylvan, the other might have been more saintly; but they will now never hear matins but those of the lark, nor reverence vaulted aisle but that of the greenwood canopy. They are twin plants of the forest, and are identified with its growth.

For the slender beech and the sapling oak
That grow by the shadowy rill,
You may cut down both at a single stroke,
You may cut down which you will.

But this you must know, that as long as they grow,
Whatever change may be,
You never can teach either oak or beech
To be aught but a greenwood tree.'

CHAPTER III

'Inflamed wrath in glowing breast.'—BUTLER.

THE knight and the friar arriving at Arlingford Castle, and leaving their horses in the care of Lady Matilda's groom, with whom the friar was in great favour, were ushered into a stately apartment where they found the baron alone, flourishing an enormous carving-knife over a brother baron—of beef—with as much vehemence of action as if he were cutting down an enemy. The baron was a gentleman of a fierce and choleric temperament: he was lineally descended from the redoubtable Fierabras of Normandy, who came over to England with the Conqueror, and who, in the battle of Hastings, killed with his own hand four-and-twenty Saxon cavaliers all on a row.[1] The very excess of the baron's internal rage on the preceding day had smothered its external manifestation: he was so equally angry with both parties, that he knew not on which to vent his wrath. He was enraged with the earl for having brought himself into such a dilemma without his privity; and he was no less enraged with the king's men for their very unseasonable intrusion. He could willingly have fallen upon both parties, but he must necessarily have begun with one; and he felt that on whichever side he should strike the first blow, his retainers would immediately join battle. He had therefore contented himself with forcing away his daughter from the scene of action. In the course of the evening he had received intelligence that the earl's castle was in possession of a party of the king's men, who had been detached by Sir Ralph Montfaucon to seize on it during the earl's absence. The baron inferred

[1] A somewhat apocryphal exploit, for the English fought on foot.—G.

from this that the earl's case was desperate; and those who have had the opportunity of seeing a rich friend fall suddenly into poverty, may easily judge by their own feelings how quickly and completely the whole moral being of the earl was changed in the baron's estimation. The baron immediately proceeded to require in his daughter's mind the same summary revolution that had taken place in his own, and considered himself exceedingly ill-used by her non-compliance. The lady had retired to her chamber, and the baron had passed a supperless and sleepless night, stalking about his apartments till an advanced hour of the morning, when hunger compelled him to summon into his presence the spoils of the buttery, which, being the intended array of an uneaten wedding feast, were more than usually abundant, and on which, when the knight and the friar entered, he was falling with desperate valour. He looked up at them fiercely, with his mouth full of beef and his eyes full of flame, and rising, as ceremony required, made an awful bow to the knight, inclining himself forward over the table and presenting his carving-knife *en militaire*, in a manner that seemed to leave it doubtful whether he meant to show respect to his visitor, or to defend his provision: but the doubt was soon cleared up by his politely motioning the knight to be seated; on which the friar advanced to the table, saying, 'For what we are going to receive,' and commenced operations without further prelude by filling and drinking a goblet of wine. The baron at the same time offered one to Sir Ralph, with the look of a man in whom habitual hospitality and courtesy were struggling with the ebullitions of natural anger. They pledged each other in silence, and the baron, having completed a copious draught, continued working his lips and his throat, as if trying to swallow his wrath as he had done his wine. Sir Ralph, not knowing well what to make of these ambiguous signs, looked for instructions to the friar, who by significant looks and gestures seemed to advise him to follow his example and partake of the good cheer before him, without speaking till the baron should be more intelligible in his demeanour. The knight and the friar, accordingly, proceeded to refect themselves after their ride; the baron looking first at the one and then at the other, scrutinising alternately the serious looks of the knight and the merry face of the friar, till at length, having

calmed himself sufficiently to speak, he said, 'Courteous knight and ghostly father, I presume you have some other business with me than to eat my beef and drink my canary;[1] and if so, I patiently await your leisure to enter on the topic.'

'Lord Fitzwater,' said Sir Ralph, 'in obedience to my royal master, King Henry, I have been the unwilling instrument of frustrating the intended nuptials of your fair daughter; yet will you, I trust, owe me no displeasure for my agency therein, seeing that the noble maiden might otherwise by this time have been the bride of an outlaw.'

'I am very much obliged to you, sir,' said the baron; 'very exceedingly obliged. Your solicitude for my daughter is truly paternal, and for a young man and a stranger very singular and exemplary; and it is very kind withal to come to the relief of my insufficiency and inexperience, and concern yourself so much in that which concerns you not.'

'You misconceive the knight, noble baron,' said the friar. 'He urges not his reason in the shape of a preconceived intent, but in that of a subsequent extenuation. True, he has done the Lady Matilda great wrong——'

'How, great wrong?' said the baron. 'What do you mean by great wrong? Would you have had her married to a wild fly-by-night, that accident made an earl and nature a deer-stealer? that has not wit enough to eat venison without picking a quarrel with monarchy? that flings away his own lands into the clutches of rascally friars, for the sake of hunting in other men's grounds, and feasting vagabonds that wear Lincoln green, and would have flung away mine into the bargain if he had had my daughter? What do you mean by great wrong?'

'True,' said the friar; 'great right, I meant.'

'Right!' exclaimed the baron; 'what right has any man to do my daughter right but myself? What right has any man to drive my daughter's bridegroom out of the chapel in the middle of the marriage ceremony, and turn all our merry faces into green wounds and bloody coxcombs, and then come and tell me he has done us great right?'

'True,' said the friar; 'he has done neither right nor wrong.'

[1] This is a manifest anachronism, the Canaries having been unknown to the mediæval world until their rediscovery in 1334.—G.

'But he has,' said the baron, 'he has done both, and I will maintain it with my glove.'

'It shall not need,' said Sir Ralph; 'I will concede anything in honour.'

'And I,' said the baron, 'will concede nothing in honour; I will concede nothing in honour to any man.'

'Neither will I, Lord Fitzwater,' said Sir Ralph, 'in that sense; but hear me. I was commissioned by the king to apprehend the Earl of Huntingdon. I brought with me a party of soldiers, picked and tried men, knowing that he would not lightly yield. I sent my lieutenant with a detachment to surprise the earl's castle in his absence, and laid my measures for intercepting him on the way to his intended nuptials; but he seems to have had intimation of this part of my plan, for he brought with him a large armed retinue, and took a circuitous route, which made him, I believe, somewhat later than his appointed hour. When the lapse of time showed me that he had taken another track, I pursued him to the chapel; and I would have waited the close of the ceremony, if I had thought that either yourself or your daughter would have felt desirous that she should have been the bride of an outlaw.'

'Who said, sir,' cried the baron, 'that we were desirous of any such thing? But truly, sir, if I had a mind to the devil for a son-in-law, I would fain see the man that should venture to interfere.'

'That would I,' said the friar; 'for I have undertaken to make her renounce the devil.'

'She shall not renounce the devil,' said the baron, 'unless I please. You are very ready with your undertakings. Will you undertake to make her renounce the earl, who, I believe, is the devil incarnate? Will you undertake that?'

'Will I undertake,' said the friar, 'to make Trent run westward, or to make flame burn downward, or to make a tree grow with its head in the earth and its root in the air?'

'So then,' said the baron, 'a girl's mind is as hard to change as nature and the elements, and it is easier to make her renounce the devil than a lover. Are you a match for the devil, and no match for a man?'

'My warfare,' said the friar, 'is not of this world. I am militant, not against man, but the devil, who goes about seeking what he may devour.'

'Oh! does he so?' said the baron; 'then I take it that makes you look for him so often in my buttery. Will you cast out the devil whose name is Legion, when you cannot cast out the imp whose name is Love?'

'Marriages,' said the friar, 'are made in heaven. Love is God's work, and therewith I meddle not.'

'God's work, indeed!' said the baron, 'when the ceremony was cut short in the church. Could men have put them asunder, if God had joined them together? And the earl is now no earl, but plain Robert Fitz-Ooth: therefore, I'll none of him.'

'He may atone,' said the friar, 'and the king may mollify. The earl is a worthy peer, and the king is a courteous king.'

'He cannot atone,' said Sir Ralph. 'He has killed the king's men; and if the baron should aid and abet, he will lose his castle and land.'

'Will I?' said the baron; 'not while I have a drop of blood in my veins. He that comes to take them shall first serve me as the friar serves my flasks of canary: he shall drain me dry as hay. Am I not disparaged? Am I not outraged? Is not my daughter vilified, and made a mockery? A girl half-married? There was my butler brought home with a broken head. My butler, friar: there is that may move your sympathy. Friar, the earl-no-earl shall come no more to my daughter.'

'Very good,' said the friar.

'It is not very good,' said the baron, 'for I cannot get her to say so.'

'I fear,' said Sir Ralph, 'the young lady must be much distressed and discomposed.'

'Not a whit, sir,' said the baron. 'She is, as usual, in a most provoking imperturbability, and contradicts me so smilingly that it would enrage you to see her.'

'I had hoped,' said Sir Ralph, 'that I might have seen her, to make my excuse in person for the hard necessity of my duty.'

He had scarcely spoken, when the door opened, and the lady made her appearance.

CHAPTER IV

'Are you mad, or what are you, that you squeak out your catches without mitigation or remorse of voice?'—*Twelfth Night.*

MATILDA, not dreaming of visitors, tripped into the apartment in a dress of forest green, with a small quiver by her side and a bow and arrow in her hand. Her hair, black and glossy as the raven's wing, curled like wandering clusters of dark ripe grapes under the edge of her round bonnet; and a plume of black feathers fell back negligently above it, with an almost horizontal inclination, that seemed the habitual effect of rapid motion against the wind. Her black eyes sparkled like sunbeams on a river: a clear, deep, liquid radiance, the reflection of ethereal fire,—tempered, not subdued, in the medium of its living and gentle mirror. Her lips were half opened to speak as she entered the apartment: and with a smile of recognition to the friar and a curtsey to the stranger knight she approached the baron and said, 'You are late at your breakfast, father.'

'I am not at breakfast,' said the baron; 'I have been at supper—my last night's supper, for I had none.'

'I am sorry,' said Matilda, 'you should have gone to bed supperless.'

I did not go to bed supperless,' said the baron; 'I did not go to bed at all; and what are you doing with that green dress and that bow and arrow?'

'I am going a-hunting,' said Matilda.

'A-hunting,' said the baron. 'What, I warrant you, to meet with the earl, and slip your neck into the same noose.'

'No,' said Matilda, 'I am not going out of our own woods to-day.'

'How do I know that?' said the baron. 'What surety have I of that?'

'Here is the friar,' said Matilda. 'He will be surety.'

'Not he,' said the baron; 'he will undertake nothing but where the devil is a party concerned.'

'Yes, I will,' said the friar: 'I will undertake anything for the Lady Matilda.'

'No matter for that,' said the baron: 'she shall not go hunting to-day.'

'Why, father,' said Matilda, 'if you coop me up here in this odious castle, I shall pine and die like a lonely swan on a pool.'

'No,' said the baron, 'the lonely swan does not die on the pool. If there be a river at hand, she flies to the river, and finds her a mate; and so shall not you.'

'But,' said Matilda, 'you may send with me any, or as many, of your grooms as you will.'

'My grooms,' said the baron, 'are all false knaves. There is not a rascal among them but loves you better than me. Villains that I feed and clothe.'

'Surely,' said Matilda, 'it is not villainy to love me: if it be, I should be sorry my father were an honest man.' The baron relaxed his muscles into a smile. 'Or my lover either,' added Matilda. The baron looked grim again.

'For your lover,' said the baron, 'you may give God thanks of him. He is as arrant a knave as ever poached.'

'What, for hunting the king's deer?' said Matilda. 'Have I not heard you rail at the forest laws by the hour?'

'Did you ever hear me,' said the baron, 'rail myself out of house and land? If I had done that, then were I a knave.'

'My lover,' said Matilda, 'is a brave man, and a true man, and a generous man, and a young man, and a handsome man; ay, and an honest man too.'

'How can he be an honest man,' said the baron, 'when he has neither house nor land, which are the better part of a man?'

'They are but the husk of a man,' said Matilda, 'the worthless coat of the chestnut: the man himself is the kernel.'

'The man is the grape stone,' said the baron, 'and the pulp of the melon. The house and land are the true substantial fruit, and all that give him savour and value.'

'He will never want house or lands,' said Matilda, 'while

the meeting boughs weave a green roof in the wood, and the free range of the hart marks out the bounds of the forest.'

'Vert and venison! vert and venison!' exclaimed the baron. 'Treason and flat rebellion. Confound your smiling face! what makes you look so good-humoured? What! you think I can't look at you and be in a passion? You think so, do you? We shall see. Have you no fear in talking thus, when here is the king's liegeman come to take us all into custody, and confiscate our goods and chattels?'

'Nay, Lord Fitzwater,' said Sir Ralph, 'you wrong me in your report. My visit is one of courtesy and excuse, not of menace and authority.'

'There it is,' said the baron: 'every one takes a pleasure in contradicting me. Here is this courteous knight, who has not opened his mouth three times since he has been in my house except to take in provision, cuts me short in my story with a flat denial.'

'Oh! I cry you mercy, sir knight,' said Matilda; 'I did not mark you before. I am your debtor for no slight favour, and so is my liege lord.'

'Her liege lord!' exclaimed the baron, taking large strides across the chamber.

'Pardon me, gentle lady,' said Sir Ralph. 'Had I known you before yesterday, I would have cut off my right hand ere it should have been raised to do you displeasure.'

'Oh, sir,' said Matilda, 'a good man may be forced on an ill office: but I can distinguish the man from his duty.' She presented to him her hand, which he kissed respectfully, and simultaneously with the contact thirty-two invisible arrows plunged at once into his heart, one from every point of the compass of his pericardia.

'Well, father,' added Matilda, 'I must go to the woods.'

'Must you?' said the baron; 'I say you must not.'

'But I am going,' said Matilda.

'But I will have up the drawbridge,' said the baron.

'But I will swim the moat,' said Matilda.

'But I will secure the gates,' said the baron.

'But I will leap from the battlement,' said Matilda.

'But I will lock you in an upper chamber,' said the baron.

'But I will shred the tapestry,' said Matilda, 'and let myself down.'

'But I will lock you in a turret,' said the baron, 'where you shall only see light through a loophole.'

'But through that loophole,' said Matilda, 'will I take my flight, like a young eagle from its aerie; and, father, while I go out freely, I will return willingly; but if once I slip out through a loophole——' She paused a moment, and then added, singing,—

The love that follows fain
  Will never its faith betray;
But the faith that is held in a chain
Will never be found again,
  If a single link give way.

The melody acted irresistibly on the harmonious propensities of the friar, who accordingly sang in his turn,—

For hark! hark! hark!
The dog doth bark,
  That watches the wild deer's lair,
The hunter awakes at the peep of the dawn,
But the lair it is empty, the deer it is gone,
  And the hunter knows not where.

Matilda and the friar then sung together,—

Then follow, oh follow! the hounds do cry;
The red sun flames in the eastern sky;
  The stag bounds over the hollow.
He that lingers in spirit, or loiters in hall,
Shall see us no more till the evening fall,
And no voice but the echo shall answer his call;
  Then follow, oh follow, follow;
  Follow, oh follow, follow!

During the process of this harmony, the baron's eyes wandered from his daughter to the friar, and from the friar to his daughter again, with an alternate expression of anger differently modified; when he looked on the friar, it was anger without qualification; when he looked on his daughter it was still anger, but tempered by an expression of involuntary admiration and pleasure. These rapid fluctuations of the baron's physiognomy—the habitual, reckless, resolute merriment in the jovial face of the friar, and the cheerful, elastic spirits that played on the lips and sparkled in the eyes of

Matilda,—would have presented a very amusing combination to Sir Ralph, if one of the three images in the group had not absorbed his total attention with feelings of intense delight very nearly allied to pain. The baron's wrath was somewhat counteracted by the reflection that his daughter's good spirits seemed to show that they would naturally rise triumphant over all disappointments; and he had had sufficient experience of her humour to know that she might sometimes be led, but never could be driven. Then, too, he was always delighted to hear her sing, though he was not at all pleased in this instance with the subject of her song. Still he would have endured the subject for the sake of the melody of the treble, but his mind was not sufficiently attuned to unison to relish the harmony of the bass. The friar's accompaniment put him out of all patience, and—'So,' he exclaimed, 'this is the way you teach my daughter to renounce the devil, is it? A hunting friar, truly! Who ever heard before of a hunting friar? A profane, roaring, bawling, bumper-bibbing, neck-breaking, catch-singing friar?'

'Under favour, bold baron,' said the friar; but the friar was warm with canary, and in his singing vein; and he could not go on in plain unmusical prose. He therefore sang in a new tune,—

Though I be now a grey, grey friar,
  Yet I was once a hale young knight;
The cry of my dogs was the only choir
  In which my spirit did take delight.

Little I recked of matin bell,
  But drowned its toll with my clanging horn;
And the only beads I loved to tell
  Were the beads of dew on the spangled thorn.

The baron was going to storm, but the friar paused, and Matilda sang in repetition,—

Little I reck of matin bell,
  But drown its toll with my clanging horn;
And the only beads I love to tell
  Are the beads of dew on the spangled thorn.

And then she and the friar sang the four lines together, and rang the changes upon them alternately.

'Whirled it like a coit over the head of the friar.'

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Little I reck of matin bell,

sang the friar.

'A precious friar,' said the baron.

But drown its toll with my clanging horn,

sang Matilda.

'More shame for you,' said the baron.

And the only beads I love to tell
Are the beads of dew on the spangled thorn,

sang Matilda and the friar together.

'Penitent and confessor,' said the baron: 'a hopeful pair truly.'

The friar went on,—

An archer keen I was withal,
As ever did lean on greenwood tree;
And could make the fleetest roebuck fall,
A good three hundred yards from me.
Though changeful time, with hand severe,
Has made me now these joys forgo,
Yet my heart bounds whene'er I hear
Yoicks! hark away! and tally ho!

Matilda chimed in as before.

'Are you mad?' said the baron. 'Are you insane? Are you possessed? What do you mean? What in the devil's name do you both mean?'

Yoicks! hark away! and tally ho!

roared the friar.

The baron's pent-up wrath had accumulated like the waters above the dam of an overshot mill. The pond-head of his passion being now filled to the utmost limit of its capacity, and beginning to overflow in the quivering of his lips and the flashing of his eyes, he pulled up all the flash-boards at once, and gave loose to the full torrent of his indignation, by seizing, like furious Ajax, not a massy stone more than two modern men could raise, but a vast dish of beef more than fifty ancient yeomen could eat, and whirled it like a coit, *in terrorem*, over the head of the friar, to the extremity of the apartment,

Where it on oaken floor did settle,
With mighty din of ponderous metal.

'Nay, father,' said Matilda, taking the baron's hand, 'do not harm the friar: he means not to offend you. My gaiety never before displeased you. Least of all should it do so now, when I have need of all my spirits to outweigh the severity of my fortune.'

As she spoke the last words, tears started into her eyes, which, as if ashamed of the involuntary betraying of her feelings, she turned away to conceal. The baron was subdued at once. He kissed his daughter, held out his hand to the friar, and said, 'Sing on, in God's name, and crack away the flasks till your voice swims in canary.' Then turning to Sir Ralph, he said, 'You see how it is, sir knight. Matilda is my daughter: but she has me in leading-strings, that is the truth of it.'

CHAPTER V

'Tis true, no lover has that power
To enforce a desperate amour,
As he that has two strings to his bow,
And burns for love and money too.'

BUTLER.

THE friar had often had experience of the baron's testy humour; but it had always before confined itself to words, in which the habit of testiness often mingled more expression of displeasure than the internal feeling prompted. He knew the baron to be hot and choleric, but at the same time hospitable and generous; passionately fond of his daughter, often thwarting her in seeming, but always yielding to her in fact. The early attachment between Matilda and the Earl of Huntingdon had given the baron no serious reason to interfere with her habits and pursuits, which were so congenial to those of her lover; and not being overburdened with orthodoxy, that is to say, not being seasoned with more of the salt of the spirit than was necessary to preserve him from excommunication, confiscation, and philotheoparoptesism,[1] he was not sorry to encourage his daughter's choice of her confessor in brother Michael, who had more jollity and less hypocrisy than any of his fraternity, and was very little anxious to disguise his love of the good things of this world under the semblance of a sanctified exterior. The friar and Matilda had often sung duets together, and had been accustomed to the baron's chiming in with a stormy *capriccio*, which was usually charmed into silence by some sudden turn in the witching melodies of Matilda. They had therefore naturally calculated, as far as their wild spirits calculated at all, on the same effects from the same causes. But the circumstances

[1] Roasting by a slow fire for the love of God.

of the preceding day had made an essential alteration in the case. The baron knew well, from the intelligence he had received, that the earl's offence was past remission, which would have been of less moment but for the awful fact of his castle being in the possession of the king's forces, and in those days possession was considerably more than eleven points of the law. The baron was therefore convinced that the earl's outlawry was infallible, and that Matilda must either renounce her lover, or become with him an outlaw and a fugitive. In proportion, therefore, to the baron's knowledge of the strength and duration of her attachment was his fear of the difficulty of its ever being overcome. Her love of the forest and the chase, which he had never before discouraged, now presented itself to him as matter of serious alarm; and if her cheerfulness gave him hope, on the one hand, by indicating a spirit superior to all disappointments, it was suspicious to him, on the other, as arising from some latent certainty of being soon united to the earl. All these circumstances concurred to render their songs of the vanished deer and greenwood archery and Yoicks and Hark-away extremely *mal à propos*, and to make his anger boil and bubble in the cauldron of his spirit, till its more than ordinary excitement burst forth with sudden impulse into active manifestation.

> But as it sometimes happens, from the might
> Of *rage* in minds that can no farther go,
> As high as they have mounted in *despite*
> In their *remission* do they sink as low,
> To *our bold baron* did it happen so.[1]

For his discobolic exploit proved the climax of his rage, and was succeeded by an immediate sense that he had passed the bounds of legitimate passion; and he sunk immediately from the very pinnacle of opposition to the level of implicit acquiescence. The friar's spirits were not to be marred by such a little incident. He was half inclined at first to return the baron's compliment, but his love of Matilda checked him; and when the baron held out his hand, the friar seized it cordially, and they drowned all recollection of the affair by pledging each other in a cup of canary.

[1] Of these lines, all that is not in italics belongs to Mr. Wordsworth: *Resolution and Independence.*

The friar having stayed long enough to see everything replaced on a friendly footing, rose and moved to take his leave. Matilda told him he must come again on the morrow, for she had a very long confession to make to him. This the friar promised to do, and departed with the knight

Sir Ralph on reaching the abbey drew his followers together, and led them to Locksley Castle, which he found in the possession of his lieutenant, whom he again left there with a sufficient force to hold it in safe keeping in the king's name, and proceeded to London to report the results of his enterprise.

Now, Henry, our royal king, was very wroth at the earl's evasion, and swore by St. Thomas à Becket (whom he had himself translated into a saint by having him knocked on the head), that he would give the castle and lands of Locksley to the man who should bring in the earl. Hereupon ensued a process of thought in the mind of the knight. The eyes of the fair huntress of Arlingford had left a wound in his heart which only she who gave could heal. He had seen that the baron was no longer very partial to the outlawed earl, but that he still retained his old affection for the lands and castle of Locksley. Now, the lands and castles were very fair things in themselves, and would be pretty appurtenances to an adventurous knight; but they would be doubly valuable as certain passports to the father's favour, which was one step towards that of the daughter, or at least towards obtaining possession of her either quietly or perforce; for the knight was not so nice in his love as to consider the lady's free grace a *sine qua non;* and to think of being, by any means whatever, the lord of Locksley and Arlingford, and the husband of the bewitching Matilda, was to cut in the shades of futurity a vista very tempting to a soldier of fortune.[1] He set out in high spirits with a chosen band of followers, and beat up all the country far and wide around both the Ouse and the Trent; but fortune did not seem disposed to second his diligence, for no vestige whatever could he trace of the earl. His followers, who were only paid with the wages of hope, began to murmur and fall off; for, as those unenlightened days were ignorant

[1] 'I open to myself many vistas in the great forest of mind, and reconnoitre the tracts of territory which in the winter I propose to acquire.' —*Peacock to Shelley*, Aug. 30, 1818.—G.

of the happy invention of paper machinery, by which one promise to pay is satisfactorily paid with another promise to pay, and that again with another in infinite series, they would not, as their wiser posterity has done, take those tenders for true pay which were not sterling; so that, one fine morning, the knight found himself sitting on a pleasant bank of the Trent, with only a solitary squire, who still clung to the shadow of preferment, because he did not see at the moment any better chance of substance.

The knight did not despair because of the desertion of his followers: he was well aware that he could easily raise recruits if he could once find trace of his game; he, therefore, rode about indefatigably over hill and dale, to the great sharpening of his own appetite and that of his squire, living gallantly from inn to inn when his purse was full, and quartering himself in the king's name on the nearest ghostly brotherhood when it happened to be empty. An autumn and a winter had passed away, when the course of his perlustrations brought him one evening into a beautiful sylvan valley, where he found a number of young women weaving garlands of flowers, and singing over their pleasant occupation. He approached them, and courteously inquired the way to the nearest town.

'There is no town within several miles,' was the answer.

'A village, then, if it be but large enough to furnish an inn?'

'There is Gamwell just by, but there is no inn nearer than the nearest town.'

'An abbey, then?'

'There is no abbey nearer than the nearest inn.'

'A house, then, or a cottage, where I may obtain hospitality for the night?'

'Hospitality!' said one of the young women; 'you have not far to seek for that. Do you not know that you are in the neighbourhood of Gamwell Hall?'

'So far from it,' said the knight, 'that I never heard the name of Gamwell Hall before.'

'Never heard of Gamwell Hall?' exclaimed all the young women together, who could as soon have dreamed of his never having heard of the sky.

'Indeed, no,' said Sir Ralph; 'but I shall be very happy to get rid of my ignorance.'

'And so shall I,' said his squire; 'for it seems that in this case knowledge will for once be a cure for hunger, wherewith I am grievously afflicted.'

'And why are you so busy, my pretty damsels, weaving these garlands?' said the knight.

'Why, do you not know, sir,' said one of the young women, 'that to-morrow is Gamwell feast?'

The knight was again obliged, with all humility, to confess his ignorance.

'Oh, sir,' said his informant, 'then you will have something to see, that I can tell you: for we shall choose a Queen of the May, and we shall crown her with flowers, and place her in a chariot of flowers, and draw it with lines of flowers, and we shall hang all the trees with flowers, and we shall strew all the ground with flowers, and we shall dance with flowers, and in flowers, and on flowers, and we shall be all flowers.'

'That you will,' said the knight; 'and the sweetest and brightest of all the flowers of the May, my pretty damsels.' On which all the pretty damsels smiled at him and each other.

'And there will be all sorts of May-games, and there will be prizes for archery, and there will be the knight's ale, and the foresters' venison, and there will be Kit Scrapesqueak with his fiddle, and little Tom Whistlerap with his fife and tabor, and Sam Trumtwang with his harp, and Peter Muggledrone with his bagpipe, and how I shall dance with Will Whitethorn!' added the girl, clapping her hands as she spoke, and bounding from the ground with the pleasure of the anticipation.

A tall athletic young man approached, to whom the rustic maidens courtesied with great respect; and one of them informed Sir Ralph that it was young Master William Gamwell. The young gentleman invited and conducted the knight to the hall, where he introduced him to the old knight his father, and to the old lady his mother, and to the young lady his sister, and to a number of bold yeomen, who were laying siege to beef, brawn, and plum pie, around a ponderous table, and taking copious draughts of old October. A motto was inscribed over the interior door,—

EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY:

an injunction which Sir Ralph and his squire showed remarkable alacrity in obeying. Old Sir Guy of Gamwell gave Sir

Ralph a very cordial welcome, and entertained him during supper with several of his best stories, enforced with an occasional slap on the back, and pointed with a peg in the ribs ; a species of vivacious eloquence in which the old gentleman excelled, and which is supposed by many of that pleasant variety of the human species, known by the name of choice fellows and comical dogs, to be the genuine tangible shape of the cream of a good joke.

CHAPTER VI

'What! shall we have incision? shall we imbrue?'—*Henry IV.*

Old Sir Guy of Gamwell, and young William Gamwell, and fair Alice Gamwell, and Sir Ralph Montfaucon and his squire, rode together the next morning to the scene of the feast. They arrived on a village green, surrounded with cottages peeping from among the trees by which the green was completely encircled. The whole circle was hung round with one continuous garland of flowers, depending in irregular festoons from the branches. In the centre of the green was a May-pole hidden in boughs and garlands; and a multitude of round-faced bumpkins and cherry-cheeked lassies were dancing around it, to the quadruple melody of Scrapesqueak, Whistlerap, Trumtwang, and Muggledrone; harmony we must not call it; for, though they had agreed to a partnership in point of tune, each, like a true painstaking man, seemed determined to have his time to himself; Muggledrone played *allegretto*, Trumtwang *allegro*, Whistlerap *presto*, and Scrapesqueak *prestissimo*. There was a kind of mathematical proportion in their discrepancy; while Muggledrone played the tune four times, Trumtwang played it five, Whistlerap six, and Scrapesqueak eight; for the latter completely distanced all his competitors, and indeed worked his elbow so nimbly that its outline was scarcely distinguishable through the mistiness of its rapid vibration.

While the knight was delighting his eyes and ears with these pleasant sights and sounds, all eyes were turned in one direction; and Sir Ralph, looking round, saw a fair lady in green and gold come riding through the trees accompanied by a portly friar in grey, and several fair damsels and gallant

grooms. On their nearer approach, he recognised the Lady Matilda and her ghostly adviser, Brother Michael. A party of foresters arrived from another direction, and then ensued cordial interchanges of greeting, and collisions of hands and lips, among the Gamwells and the newcomers,—'How does my fair coz, Mawd?' and 'How does my sweet coz, Mawd?' and 'How does my wild coz, Mawd?' And 'Eh! jolly friar, your hand, old boy'; and 'Here, honest friar'; and 'To me, merry friar,' and 'By your favour, mistress Alice'; and 'Hey! cousin Robin'; and 'Hey! cousin Will'; and 'Od's life! merry Sir Guy, you grow younger every year,'—as the old knight shook them all in turn with one hand, and slapped them on the back with the other, in token of his affection. A number of young men and women advanced, some drawing, and others dancing round, a floral car; and having placed a crown of flowers on Matilda's head, they saluted her Queen of the May, and drew her to the place appointed for the rural sports.

A hogshead of ale was abroach under an oak, and a fire was blazing in an open space before the trees to roast the fat deer which the foresters brought. The sports commenced; and, after an agreeable series of bowling, coiting, pitching, hurling, racing, leaping, grinning, wrestling or friendly dislocation of joints, and cudgel-playing or amicable cracking of skulls, the trial of archery ensued. The conqueror was to be rewarded with a golden arrow from the hand of the Queen of the May, who was to be his partner in the dance till the close of the feast. This stimulated the knight's emulation: young Gamwell supplied him with a bow and arrow, and he took his station among the foresters, but had the mortification to be outshot by them all, and to see one of them lodge the point of his arrow in the golden ring of the centre, and receive the prize from the hand of the beautiful Matilda, who smiled on him with particular grace. The jealous knight scrutinised the successful champion with great attention, and surely thought he had seen that face before. In the meantime the forester led the lady to the station. The luckless Sir Ralph drank deep draughts of love from the matchless grace of her attitudes, as, taking the bow in her left hand, and adjusting the arrow with her right, advancing her left foot, and gently curving her beautiful figure with a slight motion of her head

The forester led Matilda to the dance.

that waved her black feathers and her ringleted hair, she drew the arrow to its head, and loosed it from her open fingers. The arrow struck within the ring of gold, so close to that of the victorious forester that the points were in contact, and the feathers were intermingled. Great acclamations succeeded, and the forester led Matilda to the dance. Sir Ralph gazed on her fascinating motions till the torments of baffled love and jealous rage became unendurable; and approaching young Gamwell, he asked him if he knew the name of that forester who was leading the dance with the Queen of the May.

'Robin, I believe,' said young Gamwell, carelessly; 'I think they call him Robin.'

'Is that all you know of him?' said Sir Ralph.

'What more should I know of him?' said young Gamwell.

'Then I can tell you,' said Sir Ralph; 'he is the outlawed Earl of Huntingdon, on whose head is set so large a price.'

'Ay, is he?' said young Gamwell, in the same careless manner.

'He were a prize worth the taking,' said Sir Ralph.

'No doubt,' said young Gamwell.

'How think you?' said Sir Ralph; 'are the foresters his adherents?'

'I cannot say,' said young Gamwell.

'Is your peasantry loyal and well disposed?' said Sir Ralph.

'Passing loyal,' said young Gamwell.

'If I should call on them in the king's name,' said Sir Ralph, 'think you they would aid and assist?'

'Most likely they would,' said young Gamwell; 'one side or the other.'

'Ay, but which side?' said the knight.

'That remains to be tried,' said young Gamwell.

'I have King Henry's commission,' said the knight, 'to apprehend this earl that was. How would you advise me to act, being, as you see, without attendant force?'

'I would advise you,' said young Gamwell, 'to take yourself off without delay, unless you would relish the taste of a volley of arrows, a shower of stones, and a hailstorm of cudgel-blows, which would not be turned aside by a God save King Henry.'

Sir Ralph's squire no sooner heard this, and saw by the

looks of the speaker that he was not likely to prove a false prophet, than he clapped spurs to his horse and galloped off with might and main. This gave the knight a good excuse to pursue him, which he did with great celerity, calling, 'Stop, you rascal.' When the squire fancied himself safe out of the reach of pursuit, he checked his speed, and allowed the knight to come up with him. They rode on several miles in silence, till they discovered the towers and spires of Nottingham, where the knight introduced himself to the sheriff, and demanded an armed force to assist in the apprehension of the outlawed Earl of Huntingdon. The sheriff, who was willing to have his share of the prize, determined to accompany the knight in person, and regaled him and his man with good store of the best; after which, they, with a stout retinue of fifty men, took the way to Gamwell feast.

'God's my life,' said the sheriff, as they rode along, 'I had as lief you would tell me of a service of plate. I much doubt if this outlawed earl, this forester Robin, be not the man they call Robin Hood, who has quartered himself in Sherwood Forest, and whom in endeavouring to apprehend I have fallen divers times into disasters. He has gotten together a band of disinherited prodigals, outlawed debtors, excommunicated heretics, elder sons that have spent all they had, and younger sons that never had anything to spend; and with these he kills the king's deer, and plunders wealthy travellers of five-sixths of their money; but if they be abbots or bishops, them he despoils utterly.'

The sheriff then proceeded to relate to his companion the adventure of the abbot of Doubleflask (which some grave historians have related of the abbot of Saint Mary's, and others of the Bishop of Hereford): how the abbot, returning to his abbey in company with his high selerer, who carried in his portmanteau the rents of the abbey lands, and with a numerous train of attendants, came upon four seeming peasants, who were roasting the king's venison by the king's highway: how, in just indignation at this flagrant infringement of the forest laws, he asked them what they meant, and they answered that they meant to dine: how he ordered them to be seized and bound, and led captive to Nottingham, that they might know wild-flesh to have been destined by Providence for licensed and privileged appetites, and not for the base hunger

of unqualified knaves: how they prayed for mercy, and how the abbot swore by Saint Charity that he would show them none: how one of them thereupon drew a bugle-horn from under his smock-frock and blew three blasts, on which the abbot and his train were instantly surrounded by sixty bowmen in green: how they tied him to a tree, and made him say mass for their sins: how they unbound him, and sate him down with them to dinner, and gave him venison and wild-fowl and wine, and made him pay for his fare all the money in his high selerer's portmanteau, and enforced him to sleep all night under a tree in his cloak, and to leave the cloak behind him in the morning: how the abbot, light in pocket and heavy in heart, raised the country upon Robin Hood, for so he had heard the chief forester called by his men, and hunted him into an old woman's cottage: how Robin changed dresses with the old woman, and how the abbot rode in great triumph into Nottingham, having in custody an old woman in a green doublet and breeches: how the old woman discovered herself: how the merrymen of Nottingham laughed at the abbot: how the abbot railed at the old woman, and how the old woman out-railed the abbot, telling him that Robin had given her food and fire through the winter, which no abbot would ever do, but would rather take it from her for what he called the good of the church, by which he meant his own laziness and gluttony; and that she knew a true man from a false thief, and a free forester from a greedy abbot.

'Thus, you see,' added the sheriff, 'how this villain perverts the deluded people by making them believe that those who tithe and toll upon them for their spiritual and temporal benefit are not their best friends and fatherly guardians; for he holds that in giving to boors and old women what he takes from priests and peers, he does but restore to the former what the latter had taken from them; and this the impudent varlet calls distributive justice. Judge now if any loyal subject can be safe in such neighbourhood.'

While the sheriff was thus enlightening his companion concerning the offenders, and whetting his own indignation against them, the sun was fast sinking to the west. They rode on till they came in view of a bridge, which they saw a party approaching from the opposite side, and the knight presently discovered that the party consisted of the Lady Matilda and

Friar Michael, young Gamwell, cousin Robin, and about half-a-dozen foresters. The knight pointed out the earl to the sheriff, who exclaimed, 'Here, then, we have him an easy prey'; and they rode on manfully towards the bridge, on which the other party made halt.

'Who be these,' said the friar, 'that come riding so fast this way? Now, as God shall judge me, it is that false knight Sir Ralph Montfaucon, and the Sheriff of Nottingham, with a posse of men. We must make good our post, and let them dislodge us if they may.'

The two parties were now near enough to parley; and the sheriff and the knight, advancing in the front of the cavalcade, called on the lady, the friar, young Gamwell, and the foresters, to deliver up that false traitor, Robert, formerly Earl of Huntingdon. Robert himself made answer by letting fly an arrow that struck the ground between the fore-feet of the sheriff's horse. The horse reared up from the whizzing, and lodged the sheriff in the dust; and, at the same time, the fair Matilda favoured the knight with an arrow in his right arm, that compelled him to withdraw from the affray. His men lifted the sheriff carefully up, and replaced him on his horse, whom he immediately with great rage and zeal urged on to the assault with his fifty men at his heels, some of whom were intercepted in their advance by the arrows of the foresters and Matilda; while the friar, with an eight-foot staff, dislodged the sheriff a second time, and laid on him with all the vigour of the church militant on earth, in spite of his ejaculations of 'Hey, Friar Michael! What means this, honest friar? Hold, ghostly friar! Hold, holy friar!'—till Matilda interposed, and delivered the battered sheriff to the care of the foresters. The friar continued flourishing his staff among the sheriff's men, knocking down one, breaking the ribs of another, dislocating the shoulder of a third, flattening the nose of a fourth, cracking the skull of a fifth, and pitching a sixth into the river,[1] till the few, who were lucky enough to escape with whole bones, clapped spurs to their horses and fled for their lives, under a farewell volley of arrows.

Sir Ralph's squire, meanwhile, was glad of the excuse of

[1] Imitated from Rabelais, liv. i. ch. 27, 'Ez uns escarbouilloit la cervelle, ez aultres rompoit bras et jambes, ez aultres des lochoit les spondyles des col,' etc.—G.

Friar Tuck.

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attending his master's wound to absent himself from the battle; and put the poor knight to a great deal of unnecessary pain by making as long a business as possible of extracting the arrow, which he had not accomplished when Matilda, approaching, extracted it with great facility, and bound up the wound with her scarf, saying, 'I reclaim my arrow, sir knight, which struck where I aimed it, to admonish you to desist from your enterprise. I could as easily have lodged it in your heart.'

'It did not need,' said the knight, with rueful gallantry; 'you have lodged one there already.'

'If you mean to say that you love me,' said Matilda, 'it is more than I ever shall you: but if you will show your love by no further interfering with mine, you will at least merit my gratitude.'

The knight made a wry face under the double pain of heart and body caused at the same moment by the material or martial, and the metaphorical or erotic arrow, of which the latter was thus barbed by a declaration more candid than flattering; but he did not choose to put in any such claim to the lady's gratitude as would bar all hopes of her love: he therefore remained silent; and the lady and her escort, leaving him and the sheriff to the care of the squire, rode on till they came in sight of Arlingford Castle, when they parted in several directions. The friar rode off alone; and after the foresters had lost sight of him, they heard his voice through the twilight, singing—

A staff, a staff, of a young oak graff,
That is both stoure and stiff,
Is all a good friar can needs desire
To shrive a proud sheriffe.
And thou, fine fellôwe, who has tasted so
Of the forester's greenwood game,
Wilt be in no haste thy time to waste
In seeking more taste of the same:
Or this can I read thee, and riddle thee well,
Thou hadst better by far be the devil in hell,
Than the sheriff of Nottinghâme.

CHAPTER VII

'Now, master sheriff, what's your will with me?'—*Henry IV.*

MATILDA had carried her point with the baron of ranging at liberty whithersoever she would, under her positive promise to return home; she was a sort of prisoner on parole: she had obtained the indulgence by means of an obsolete habit of always telling the truth and keeping her word, which our enlightened age has discarded with other barbarisms, but which had the effect of giving her father so much confidence in her, that he could not help considering her word a better security than locks and bars.

The baron had been one of the last to hear of the rumours of the new outlaws of Sherwood, as Matilda had taken all possible precautions to keep those rumours from his knowledge, fearing that they might cause the interruption of her greenwood liberty; and it was only during her absence at Gamwell feast, that the butler, being thrown off his guard by liquor, forgot her injunctions, and regaled the baron with a long story of the right merry adventure of Robin Hood and the Abbot of Doubleflask.

The baron was one morning, as usual, cutting his way valorously through a rampart of cold provision, when his ears were suddenly assailed by a tremendous alarm, and sallying forth, and looking from his castle wall, he perceived a large party of armed men on the other side of the moat, who were calling on the warder in the king's name to lower the drawbridge and raise the portcullis, which had both been secured by Matilda's order. The baron walked along the battlement till he came opposite to these unexpected visitors, who, as

soon as they saw him, called out, 'Lower the drawbridge, in the king's name.'

'For what, in the devil's name?' said the baron.

'The Sheriff of Nottingham,' said one, 'lies in bed grievously bruised, and many of his men are wounded, and several of them slain; and Sir Ralph Montfaucon, knight, is sore wounded in the arm; and we are charged to apprehend William Gamwell the younger, of Gamwell Hall, and Father Michael of Rubygill Abbey, and Matilda Fitzwater of Arlingford Castle, as agents and accomplices in the said breach of the king's peace.'

'Breach of the king's fiddlestick!' answered the baron. 'What do you mean by coming here with your cock and bull stories of my daughter grievously bruising the Sheriff of Nottingham? You are a set of vagabond rascals in disguise; and I hear, by the bye, there is a gang of thieves that has just set up business in Sherwood Forest; a pretty pretence, indeed, to get into my castle with force and arms, and make a famine in my buttery, and a drought in my cellar, and a void in my strong box, and a vacuum in my silver scullery.'

'Lord Fitzwater,' cried one, 'take heed how you resist lawful authority; we will prove ourselves——'

'You will prove yourselves arrant knaves, I doubt not,' answered the baron; 'but, villains, you shall be more grievously bruised by me than ever was the sheriff by my daughter (a pretty tale truly!), if you do not forthwith avoid my territory.'

By this time the baron's men had flocked to the battlements, with long-bows and cross-bows, slings and stones, and Matilda with her bow and quiver at their head. The assailants, finding the castle so well defended, deemed it expedient to withdraw till they could return in greater force, and rode off to Rubygill Abbey, where they made known their errand to the father abbot, who, having satisfied himself of their legitimacy, and conned over the allegations, said that doubtless Brother Michael had heinously offended; but it was not for the civil law to take cognisance of the misdoings of a holy friar; that he would summon a chapter of monks, and pass on the offender a sentence proportionate to his offence. The ministers of civil justice said that would not do. The abbot said it would do and should; and bade them not provoke the meekness of his catholic charity to lay them

under the curse of Rome. This threat had its effect, and the party rode off to Gamwell Hall, where they found the Gamwells and their men just sitting down to dinner, which they saved them the trouble of eating by consuming it in the king's name themselves, having first seized and bound young Gamwell; all which they accomplished by dint of superior numbers, in despite of a most vigorous stand made by the Gamwellites in defence of their young master and their provisions.

The baron, meanwhile, after the ministers of justice had departed, interrogated Matilda concerning the alleged fact of the grievous bruising of the Sheriff of Nottingham. Matilda told him the whole history of Gamwell feast, and of their battle on the bridge, which had its origin in a design of the Sheriff of Nottingham to take one of the foresters into custody.

'Ay! ay!' said the baron, 'and I guess who that forester was; but truly this friar is a desperate fellow. I did not think there could have been much valour under a grey frock. And so you wounded the knight in the arm? You are a wild girl, Mawd,—a chip of the old block, Mawd. A wild girl, and a wild friar, and three or four foresters, wild lads all, to keep a bridge against a tame knight, and a tame sheriff, and fifty tame varlets; by this light, the like was never heard! But do you know, Mawd, you must not go about so any more, sweet Mawd: you must stay at home, you must ensconce; for there is your tame sheriff on the one hand, that will take you perforce; and there is your wild forester on the other hand, that will take you without any force at all, Mawd: your wild forester, Robin, cousin Robin, Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest, that beats and binds bishops, spreads nets for archbishops, and hunts a fat abbot as if he were a buck: excellent game, no doubt, but you must hunt no more in such company. I see it now: truly I might have guessed before that the bold outlaw Robin, the most courteous Robin, the new thief of Sherwood Forest, was your lover, the earl that has been: I might have guessed it before, and what led you so much to the woods; but you hunt no more in such company. No more May games and Gamwell feasts. My lands and castle would be the forfeit of a few more such pranks; and I think they are as well in my hands as the king's, quite as well.'

"'Ay! ay! if you can; very true: watch and ward, Maud.'"

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'You know, father,' said Matilda, 'the condition of keeping me at home: I get out if I can, and not on parole.'

'Ay! ay!' said the baron, 'if you can; very true: watch and ward, Mawd, watch and ward is my word: if you can, is yours. The mark is set, and so start fair.'

The baron would have gone on in this way for an hour; but the friar made his appearance with a long oak staff in his hand, singing,—

Drink and sing, and eat and laugh,
And so go forth to battle:
For the top of a skull and the end of a staff
Do make a ghostly rattle.

'Ho! ho! friar!' said the baron,—'singing friar, laughing friar, roaring friar, fighting friar, hacking friar, thwacking friar; cracking, cracking, cracking friar; joke-cracking, bottle-cracking, skull-cracking friar!'

'And ho! ho!' said the friar,—'bold baron, old baron, sturdy baron, wordy baron, long baron, strong baron, mighty baron, flighty baron, mazed baron, crazed baron, hacked baron, thwacked baron; cracked, cracked, cracked baron; bone-cracked, sconce-cracked, brain-cracked baron!'

'What do you mean,' said the baron, 'bully friar, by calling me hacked and thwacked?'

'Were you not in the wars?' said the friar, 'where he who escapes unhacked does more credit to his heels than his arms. I pay tribute to your valour in calling you hacked and thwacked.'

'I never was thwacked in my life,' said the baron; 'I stood my ground manfully, and covered my body with my sword. If I had had the luck to meet with a fighting friar indeed, I might have been thwacked, and soundly too; but I hold myself a match for any two laymen; it takes nine fighting laymen to make a fighting friar.'

'Whence come you now, holy father?' asked Matilda.

'From Rubygill Abbey,' said the friar, 'whither I never return:

For I must seek some hermit cell,
Where I alone my beads may tell,
And on the wight who that way fares
Levy a toll for my ghostly pray'rs,

Levy a toll, levy a toll,
Levy a toll for my ghostly pray'rs.'

'What is the matter, then, father?' said Matilda.

'This is the matter,' said the friar. 'My holy brethren have held a chapter on me, and sentenced me to seven years' privation of wine. I therefore deemed it fitting to take my departure, which they would fain have prohibited. I was enforced to clear the way with my staff. I have grievously

'"*What do you mean, bully friar, by calling me hacked and thwacked?*"'

beaten my dearly beloved brethren. I grieve thereat: but they forced me thereto. I have beaten them much. I mowed them down to the right and to the left, and left them like an ill-reaped field of wheat, ear and straw pointing all ways, scattered in singleness and jumbled in masses: and so bade them farewell, saying, Peace be with you. But I must not tarry, lest danger be in my rear; therefore, farewell, sweet Matilda, and farewell, noble baron; and farewell, sweet

Matilda again, the alpha and omega of Father Michael, the first and the last.'

'Farewell, father,' said the baron, a little softened; 'and God send you be never assailed by more than fifty men at a time.'

'Amen,' said the friar, 'to that good wish.'

'And we shall meet again, father, I trust,' said Matilda.

'When the storm is blown over,' said the baron.

'Doubt it not,' said the friar, 'though flooded Trent were between us, and fifty devils guarded the bridge.'

He kissed Matilda's forehead, and walked away without a song.

Little John.

CHAPTER VIII

'Let gallows gape for dog : let man go free.'
Henry V.

A PAGE had been brought up in Gamwell Hall, who, while he was little, had been called Little John, and continued to be so called after he had grown to be a foot taller than any other man in the house. He was full seven feet high. His latitude was worthy of his longitude, and his strength was worthy of both ; and though an honest man by profession, he had practised archery on the king's deer for the benefit of his master's household, and for the improvement of his own eye and hand, till his aim had become infallible within the range of two miles.[1] He had fought manfully in defence of his young master, took his captivity exceedingly to heart, and fell into bitter grief and boundless rage when he heard that he had been tried in Nottingham and sentenced to death.

[1] See page 74. The average range of a bow-shot is estimated by a writer in the *Antiquary* at 250 yards, and Sir Walter Scott is contented with two-thirds of this :

'Well could he hit a fallow-deer
Five hundred feet him fro.'
—G.

'The second rebounded with the hollow vibration of a drumstick from the shaven sconce of the Abbot of Rubygill.'

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Alice Gamwell, at Little John's request, wrote three letters of one tenour; and Little John, having attached them to three blunt arrows, saddled the fleetest steed in old Sir Guy of Gamwell's stables, mounted, and rode first to Arlingford Castle, where he shot one of the three arrows over the battlements; then to Rubygill Abbey, where he shot the second into the abbey garden; then back past Gamwell Hall to the borders of Sherwood Forest, where he shot the third into the wood. Now the first of these arrows lighted in the nape of the neck of Lord Fitzwater, and lodged itself firmly between his skin and his collar; the second rebounded with the hollow vibration of a drumstick from the shaven sconce of the Abbot of Rubygill: and the third pitched perpendicularly into the centre of a venison pasty in which Robin Hood was making incision.

Matilda ran up to her father in the court of Arlingford Castle, seized the arrow, drew off the letter, and concealed it in her bosom before the baron had time to look round, which he did with many expressions of rage against the impudent villain who had shot a blunt arrow into the nape of his neck.

'But you know, father,' said Matilda, 'a sharp arrow in the same place would have killed you; therefore the sending a blunt one was very considerate.'

'Considerate with a vengeance,' said the baron. 'Where was the consideration of sending it at all? This is some of your forester's pranks. He has missed you in the forest, since I have kept watch and ward over you, and by way of a love-token and a remembrance to you takes a random shot at me.'

The Abbot of Rubygill picked up the missile-missive or messenger arrow, which had rebounded from the shaven crown, with a very unghostly malediction on the sender, which he suddenly checked with a pious and consolatory reflection on the goodness of Providence in having blessed him with such a thickness of skull, to which he was now indebted for temporal preservation, as he had before been for spiritual promotion. He opened the letter, which was addressed to Father Michael; and found it to contain an intimation that William Gamwell was to be hanged on Monday at Nottingham.

'And I wish,' said the abbot, 'Father Michael were to be hanged with him: an ungrateful monster, after I had rescued him from the fangs of civil justice, to reward my lenity by not leaving a bone unbruised among the holy brotherhood of Rubygill.'

Robin Hood extracted from his venison pasty a similar intimation of the evil destiny of his cousin, whom he determined, if possible, to rescue from the jaws of Cerberus.

The Sheriff of Nottingham, though still sore with his bruises, was so intent on revenge, that he raised himself from his bed to attend the execution of William Gamwell. He rode to the august structure of retributive Themis, as the French call a gallows, in all the pride and pomp of shrievalty, and with a splendid retinue of well-equipped knaves and varlets, as our ancestors called honest serving-men.

Young Gamwell was brought forth with his arms pinioned behind him; his sister Alice and his father, Sir Guy, attending him in disconsolate mood. He had rejected the confessor provided by the sheriff, and had insisted on the privilege of choosing his own, whom Little John had promised to bring. Little John, however, had not made his appearance when the fatal procession began its march; but when they reached the place of execution, Little John appeared, accompanied by a ghostly friar.

'Sheriff,' said young Gamwell, 'let me not die with my hands pinioned: give me a sword, and set any odds of your men against me, and let me die the death of a man, like the descendant of a noble house, which has never yet been stained with ignominy.'

'No, no,' said the sheriff; 'I have had enough of setting odds against you. I have sworn you shall be hanged, and hanged you shall be.'

'Then God have mercy on me,' said young Gamwell; 'and now, holy friar, shrive my sinful soul.'

The friar approached.

'Let me see this friar,' said the sheriff: 'if he be the friar of the bridge, I had as lief have the devil in Nottingham; but he shall find me too much for him here.'

'The friar of the bridge,' said Little John, 'as you very well know, sheriff, was Father Michael of Rubygill Abbey, and you may easily see that this is not the man.'

"*"But you know, father, a sharp arrow in the same place would have killed you."*"

'I see it,' said the sheriff; 'and God be thanked for his absence.'

Young Gamwell stood at the foot of the ladder. The friar approached him, opened his book, groaned, turned up the white of his eyes, tossed up his arms in the air, and said '*Dominus vobiscum.*' He then crossed both his hands on his breast under the folds of his holy robes, and stood a few moments as if in inward prayer. A deep silence among the attendant crowd accompanied this action of the friar; interrupted only by the hollow tone of the death-bell, at long and dreary intervals. Suddenly the friar threw off his holy robes, and appeared a forester clothed in green, with a sword in his right hand and a horn in his left. With the sword he cut the bonds of William Gamwell, who instantly snatched a sword from one of the sheriff's men; and with the horn he blew a loud blast, which was answered at once by four bugles from the quarters of the four winds, and from each quarter came five-and-twenty bowmen running all on a row.

'Treason! treason!' cried the sheriff. Old Sir Guy sprang to his son's side, and so did Little John; and the four setting back to back, kept the sheriff and his men at bay till the bowmen came within shot and let fly their arrows among the sheriff's men, who, after a brief resistance, fled in all directions. The forester who had personated the friar, sent an arrow after the flying sheriff, calling with a strong voice, 'To the sheriff's left arm, as a keepsake from Robin Hood.' The arrow reached its destiny; the sheriff redoubled his speed, and, with one arrow in his arm, did not stop to breathe till he was out of reach of another.

The foresters did not waste time in Nottingham, but were soon at a distance from its walls. Sir Guy returned with Alice to Gamwell Hall; but thinking he should not be safe there, from the share he had had in his son's rescue, they only remained long enough to supply themselves with clothes and money, and departed, under the escort of Little John, to another seat of the Gamwells in Yorkshire. Young Gamwell, taking it for granted that his offence was past remission, determined on joining Robin Hood, and accompanied him to the forest, where it was deemed expedient that he should change his name; and he was rechristened without a priest, and with wine instead of water, by the immortal name of Scarlet.

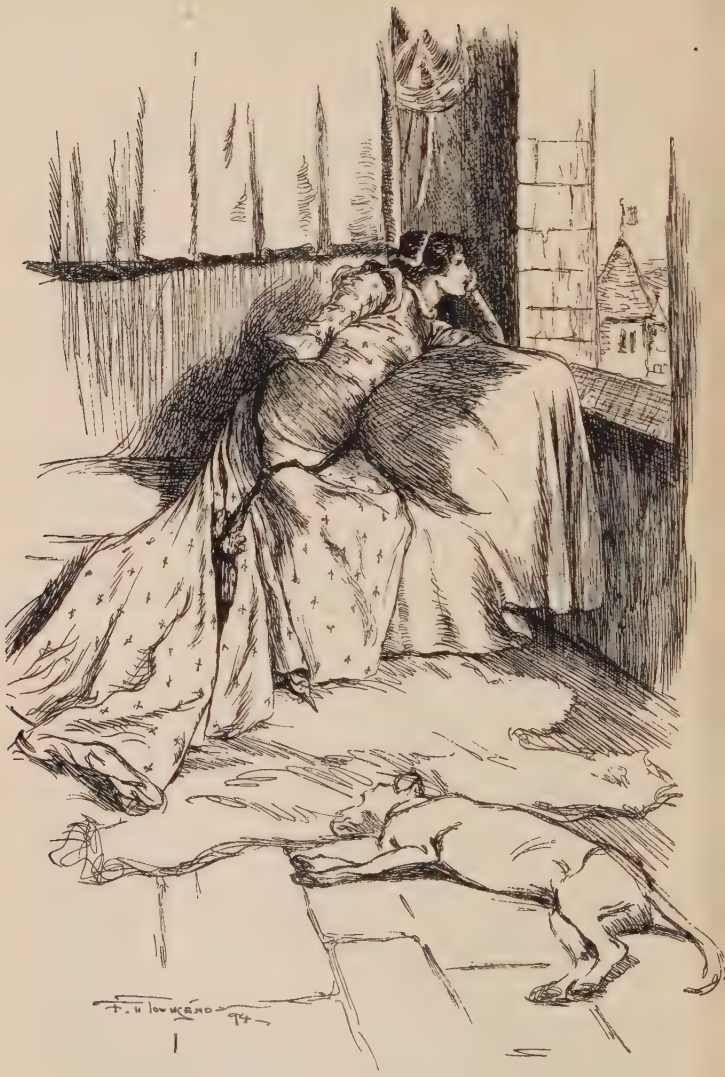
CHAPTER IX

'Who set my man i' the stocks?—
I set him there, sir: but his own disorders
Deserved much less advancement.'

King Lear.

THE baron was inflexible in his resolution not to let Matilda leave the castle. The letter, which announced to her the approaching fate of young Gamwell, filled her with grief, and increased the irksomeness of a privation which already preyed sufficiently on her spirits, and began to undermine her health. She had no longer the consolation of the society of her old friend Father Michael; the little fat friar of Rubygill was substituted as the castle confessor, not without some misgivings in his ghostly bosom; but he was more allured by the sweet savour of the good things of this world at Arlingford Castle, than deterred by his awe of the Lady Matilda, which nevertheless was so excessive, from his recollection of the twang of the bow-string, that he never ventured to find her in the wrong, much less to enjoin anything in the shape of penance, as was the occasional practice of holy confessors, with or without cause, for the sake of pious discipline, and what was in those days called social order, namely, the preservation of the privileges of the few who happened to have any, at the expense of the swinish multitude who happened to have none, except that of working and being shot at for the benefit of their betters, which is obviously not the meaning of social order in our more enlightened times; let us therefore be grateful to Providence, and sing *Te Deum laudamus* in chorus with the Holy Alliance.

The little friar, however, though he found the lady spotless, found the butler a great sinner; at least so it was conjectured,



Her spirit pined in the monotonous inaction to which she was condemned.

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from the length of time he always took to confess him in the buttery.

Matilda became every day more pale and dejected; her spirit, which could have contended against any strenuous affliction, pined in the monotonous inaction to which she was condemned. While she could freely range the forest with her lover in the morning, she had been content to return to her father's castle in the evening, thus preserving underanged the balance of her duties, habits, and affections; not without a hope that the repeal of her lover's outlawry might be eventually obtained, by a judicious distribution of some of his forest spoils among the holy fathers and saints-that-were-to-be,—pious proficients in the ecclesiastic art equestrian, who rode the conscience of King Henry with double-curb bridles, and kept it well in hand when it showed mettle and seemed inclined to rear and plunge. But the affair at Gamwell feast threw many additional difficulties in the way of the accomplishment of this hope: and very shortly afterwards King Henry the Second went to make up in the next world his quarrel with Thomas à Becket; and Richard Cœur de Lion made all England resound with preparations for the crusade, to the great delight of many zealous adventurers, who eagerly flocked under his banner, in the hope of enriching themselves with Saracen spoil, which they called fighting the battles of God. Richard, who was not remarkably scrupulous in his financial operations, was not likely to overlook the lands and castle of Locksley, which he appropriated immediately to his own purposes, and sold to the highest bidder. Now, as the repeal of the outlawry would involve the restitution of the estates to the rightful owner, it was obvious that it could never be expected from that most legitimate and most Christian king, Richard the First of England, the arch-crusader and anti-jacobin by excellence—the very type, flower, cream, pink, symbol, and mirror of all the Holy Alliances that have ever existed on earth, excepting that he seasoned his superstition and love of conquest with a certain condiment of romantic generosity and chivalrous self-devotion, with which his imitators in all other points have found it convenient to dispense. To give freely to one man what he had taken forcibly from another was generosity of which he was very capable; but to restore what he had taken to the man from whom he had taken it, was something that

wore too much of the cool physiognomy of justice to be easily reconcilable to his kingly feelings. He had, besides, not only sent all King Henry's saints about their business, or rather about their no-business—their *fainéantise*—but he had laid them under rigorous contribution for the purposes of his holy war; and having made them refund to the piety of the successor what they had extracted from the piety of the precursor, he compelled them, in addition, to give him their blessing for nothing. Matilda, therefore, from all these circumstances, felt little hope that her lover would be anything but an outlaw for life.

The departure of King Richard from England was succeeded by the episcopal regency of the Bishops of Ely and Durham. Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, proceeded to show his sense of Christian fellowship by arresting his brother bishop, and despoiling him of his share in the government; and to set forth his humility and loving-kindness in a retinue of nobles and knights who consumed in one night's entertainment some five years' revenue of their entertainer, and in a guard of fifteen hundred foreign soldiers, whom he considered indispensable to the exercise of a vigour beyond the law in maintaining wholesome discipline over the refractory English. The ignorant impatience of the swinish multitude with these fruits of good living, brought forth by one of the meek who had inherited the earth, displayed itself in a general ferment, of which Prince John took advantage to make the experiment of getting possession of his brother's crown in his absence. He began by calling at Reading a council of barons, whose aspect induced the holy bishop to disguise himself (some say as an old woman, which, in the twelfth century, perhaps might have been a disguise for a bishop), and make his escape beyond sea. Prince John followed up his advantage by obtaining possession of several strong posts, and, among others, of the castle of Nottingham.

While John was conducting his operations at Nottingham, he rode at times past the castle of Arlingford. He stopped on one occasion to claim Lord Fitzwater's hospitality, and made most princely havoc among his venison and brawn. Now, it is a matter of record among divers great historians and learned clerks that he was then and there grievously smitten by the charms of the lovely Matilda, and that a few

days after he despatched his travelling minstrel, or laureate, Harpiton [1] (whom he retained at moderate wages, to keep a journal of his proceedings, and prove them all just and legitimate), to the castle of Arlingford, to make proposals to the lady. This Harpiton was a very useful person. He was always ready, not only to maintain the cause of his master with his pen, and to sing his eulogies to his harp, but to undertake at a moment's notice any kind of courtly employment, called dirty work by the profane, which the blessings of civil government, namely, his master's pleasure, and the interests of social order, namely, his own emolument, might require. In short,

> Il eût l'emploi qui certes n'est pas mince,
> Et qu'à la cour, où tout se peint en beau,
> On appelloit être l'ami du prince ;
> Mais qu'à la ville, et surtout en province,
> Les gens grossiers ont nommé maquereau.

Prince John was of opinion that the love of a prince actual and king expectant, was in itself a sufficient honour to the daughter of a simple baron, and that the right divine of royalty would make it sufficiently holy without the rite divine of the church. He was, therefore, graciously pleased to fall into an exceeding passion, when his confidential messenger returned from his embassy in piteous plight, having been, by the baron's order, first tossed in a blanket and set in the stocks to cool, and afterwards ducked in the moat and set again in the stocks to dry. John swore to revenge horribly this flagrant outrage on royal prerogative, and to obtain possession of the lady by force of arms ; and accordingly collected a body of troops, and marched upon Arlingford Castle. A letter, conveyed as before on the point of a blunt arrow, announced his approach to Matilda : and Lord Fitzwater had just time to assemble his retainers, collect a hasty supply of provision, raise the drawbridge, and drop the portcullis, when the castle was surrounded by the enemy. The little fat friar, who during the confusion was asleep in the buttery, found himself, on awaking, inclosed in the besieged castle, and dolefully bewailed his evil chance.

[1] Harp-it-on ; or, a *corruption* of Ἑρπετόν, a creeping thing.

CHAPTER X

'A noble girl, i' faith. Heart! I think I fight with a familiar, or the ghost of a fencer. Call you this an amorous visage? Here's blood that would have served me these seven years, in broken heads and cut fingers, and now it runs out altogether.'—MIDDLETON, *Roaring Girl.*

PRINCE JOHN sat down impatiently before Arlingford Castle in the hope of starving out the besieged; but finding the duration of their supplies extend itself in an equal ratio with the prolongation of his hope, he made vigorous preparations for carrying the place by storm. He constructed an immense machine on wheels, which, being advanced to the edge of the moat, would lower a temporary bridge, of which one end would rest on the bank and the other on the battlements, and which, being well furnished with stepping-boards, would enable his men to ascend the inclined plane with speed and facility. Matilda received intimation of this design by the usual friendly channel of a blunt arrow, which must either have been sent from some secret friend in the prince's camp, or from some vigorous archer beyond it: the latter will not appear improbable, when we consider that Robin Hood and Little John could shoot two English miles and an inch point-blank.

Come scrive Turpino, che non erra.

The machine was completed, and the ensuing morning fixed for the assault. Six men, relieved at intervals, kept watch over it during the night. Prince John retired to sleep, congratulating himself in the expectation that another day would place the fair culprit at his princely mercy. His anticipations mingled with the visions of his slumber, and he

dreamed of wounds and drums, and sacking and firing the castle, and bearing off in his arms the beautiful prize through the midst of fire and smoke. In the height of this imaginary turmoil, he awoke, and conceived for a few moments that certain sounds which rang in his ears were the continuation of those of his dream, in that sort of half-consciousness between sleeping and waking, when reality and phantasy meet and mingle in dim and confused resemblance. He was, however, very soon fully awake to the fact of his guards calling on him to arm, which he did in haste, and beheld the machine in flames, and a furious conflict raging around it. He hurried to the spot, and found that his camp had been suddenly assailed from one side by a party of foresters, and that the baron's people had made a sortie on the other, and that they had killed the guards, and set fire to the machine, before the rest of the camp could come to the assistance of their fellows.

The night was in itself intensely dark, and the firelight shed around it a vivid and unnatural radiance. On one side, the crimson light quivered by its own agitation on the waveless moat, and on the bastions and buttresses of the castle, and their shadows lay in massy blackness on the illuminated walls: on the other, it shone upon the woods, streaming far within among the open trunks, or resting on the closer foliage. The circumference of darkness bounded the scene on all sides; and in the centre raged the war; shields, helmets, and bucklers gleaming and glittering as they rang and clashed against each other; plumes confusedly tossing in the crimson light, and the massy light and shade that fell on the faces of the combatants, giving additional energy to their ferocious expression.

John, drawing nearer to the scene of action, observed two young warriors fighting side by side, one of whom wore the habit of a forester, the other that of a retainer of Arlingford. He looked intently on them both; their position towards the fire favoured the scrutiny; and the hawk's eye of love very speedily discovered that the latter was the fair Matilda. The forester he did not know; but he had sufficient tact to discern that his success would be very much facilitated by separating her from this companion, above all others. He therefore formed a party of men into a wedge, only taking especial care not to be the point of it himself, and drove it between them with so much precision, that they were in a moment far asunder.

'Lady Matilda,' said John, 'yield yourself my prisoner.'

'If you would wear me, prince,' said Matilda, 'you must win me': and without giving him time to deliberate on the courtesy of fighting with the lady of his love, she raised her sword in the air, and lowered it on his head with an impetus that would have gone nigh to fathom even that extraordinary depth of brain which always by divine grace furnishes the interior of a head-royal, if he had not very dexterously parried the blow. Prince John wished to disarm and take captive, not in any way to wound or injure, least of all to kill, his fair opponent. Matilda was only intent to get rid of her antagonist at any rate: the edge of her weapon painted his complexion with streaks of very unloverlike crimson, and she would probably have marred John's hand for ever signing Magna Charta, but that he was backed by the advantage of numbers, and that her sword broke short on the boss of his buckler. John was following up his advantage to make a captive of the lady, when he was suddenly felled to the earth by an unseen antagonist. Some of his men picked him carefully up, and conveyed him to his tent, stunned and stupefied.

When he recovered, he found Harpiton diligently assisting in his recovery, more in the fear of losing his place than in that of losing his master; the prince's first inquiry was for the prisoner he had been on the point of taking at the moment when his *habeas corpus* was so unseasonably suspended. He was told that his people had been on the point of securing the said prisoner, when the devil suddenly appeared among them in the likeness of a tall friar, having his grey frock cinctured with a sword-belt, and his crown, which whether it were shaven or no they could not see, surmounted with a helmet, and flourishing an eight-foot staff, with which he laid about him to the right and to the left, knocking down the prince and his men as if they had been so many nine-pins: in fine, he had rescued the prisoner, and made a clear passage through friend and foe, and in conjunction with a chosen party of archers, had covered the retreat of the baron's men and the foresters, who had all gone off in a body towards Sherwood Forest.

Harpiton suggested that it would be desirable to sack the castle, and volunteered to lead the van on the occasion, as the defenders were withdrawn, and the exploit seemed to promise much profit and little danger: John considered that the castle

'The devil in the likeness of a tall friar.

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would in itself be a great acquisition to him as a stronghold in furtherance of his design on his brother's throne; and was determining to take possession with the first light of morning, when he had the mortification to see the castle burst into flames in several places at once. A piteous cry was heard from within, and while the prince was proclaiming a reward to any one who would enter into the burning pile, and elucidate the mystery of the doleful voice, forth waddled the little fat friar in an agony of fear, out of the fire into the frying-pan; for he was instantly taken into custody and carried before Prince John, wringing his hands and tearing his hair.

'Are you the friar,' said Prince John, in a terrible voice, 'that laid me prostrate in battle, mowed down my men like grass, rescued my captive, and covered the retreat of my enemies? And, not content with this, have you now set fire to the castle in which I intended to take up my royal quarters?'

The little friar quaked like a jelly: he fell on his knees, and attempted to speak; but in his eagerness to vindicate himself from this accumulation of alarming charges, he knew not where to begin; his ideas rolled round upon each other like the radii of a wheel; the words he desired to utter, instead of issuing, as it were, in a right line from his lips, seemed to conglobate themselves into a sphere turning on its own axis in his throat: after several ineffectual efforts, his utterance totally failed him, and he remained gasping, with his mouth open, his lips quivering, his hands clasped together, and the whites of his eyes turned up towards the prince with an expression most ruefully imploring.

'Are you that friar?' repeated the prince.

Several of the bystanders declared that he was not that friar. The little friar, encouraged by this patronage, found his voice, and pleaded for mercy. The prince questioned him closely concerning the burning of the castle. The little friar declared, that he had been in too great fear during the siege to know much of what was going forward, except that he had been conscious during the last few days of a lamentable deficiency of provisions, and had been present that very morning at the broaching of the last butt of sack. Harpiton groaned in sympathy. The little friar added, that he knew nothing of what had passed since, till he heard the flames roaring at his elbow.

'Take him away, Harpiton,' said the prince; 'fill him with sack and turn him out.'

'Never mind the sack,' said the little friar, 'turn me out at once.'

'A sad chance,' said Harpiton, 'to be turned out without sack.'

But what Harpiton thought a sad chance the little friar thought a merry one, and went bounding like a fat buck towards the abbey of Rubygill.

An arrow, with a letter attached to it, was shot into the camp, and carried to the prince. The contents were these:—

'PRINCE JOHN I do not consider myself to have resisted lawful authority in defending my castle against you, seeing that you are at present in a state of active rebellion against your liege sovereign Richard: and if my provisions had not failed me, I would have maintained it till doomsday. As it is, I have so well disposed my combustibles that it shall not serve you as a stronghold in your rebellion. If you hunt in the chases of Nottinghamshire, you may catch other game than my daughter. Both she and I are content to be houseless for a time, in the reflection that we have deserved your enmity, and the friendship of Cœur de Lion. FITZWATER.'

CHAPTER XI

'—Tuck, the merry friar, who many a sermon made
In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws, and their trade.'
DRAYTON.

THE baron, with some of his retainers, and all the foresters, halted at daybreak in Sherwood Forest. The foresters quickly erected tents, and prepared an abundant breakfast of venison and ale.

'Now, Lord Fitzwater,' said the chief forester, 'recognise your son-in-law that was to have been, in the outlaw Robin Hood.'

'Ay, ay,' said the baron, 'I have recognised you long ago.'

'And recognise your young friend Gamwell,' said the second, 'in the outlaw Scarlet.'

'And Little John, the page,' said the third, 'in Little John the outlaw.'

'And Father Michael, of Rubygill Abbey,' said the friar, 'in Friar Tuck, of Sherwood Forest. Truly, I have a chapel here hard by, in the shape of a hollow tree, where I put up my prayers for travellers, and Little John holds the plate at the door, for good praying deserves good paying.'

'I am in fine company,' said the baron.

'In the very best of company,' said the friar; 'in the high court of Nature, and in the midst of her own nobility. Is it not so? This goodly grove is our palace: the oak and the beech are its colonnade and its canopy: the sun and the moon and the stars are its everlasting lamps: the grass, and the daisy, and the primrose, and the violet, are its many-coloured floor of green, white, yellow, and blue; the may-flower, and the woodbine, and the eglantine, and the ivy, are

its decorations, its curtains, and its tapestry: the lark, and the thrush, and the linnet, and the nightingale, are its unhired minstrels and musicians.[1] Robin Hood is king of the forest both by dignity of birth and by virtue of his standing army: to say nothing of the free choice of his people, which he has indeed, but I pass it by as an illegitimate basis of power. He holds his dominion over the forest, and its horned multitude of citizen-deer, and its swinish multitude or peasantry of wild boars, by right of conquest and force of arms. He levies contributions among them by the free consent of his archers, their virtual representatives. If they should find a voice to complain that we are "tyrants and usurpers to kill and cook them up in their assigned and native dwelling-place," we should most convincingly admonish them, with point of arrow, that they have nothing to do with our laws but to obey them. Is it not written that the fat ribs of the herd shall be fed upon by the mighty in the land? And have not they withal my blessing? my orthodox, canonical, and archiepiscopal blessing? Do I not give thanks for them when they are well roasted and smoking under my nose? What title had William of Normandy to England, that Robin of Locksley has not to merry Sherwood? William fought for his claim. So does Robin. With whom, both? With any that would or will dispute it. William raised contributions. So does Robin. From whom, both? From all that they could or can make pay them. Why did any pay them to William? Why do any pay them to Robin? For the same reason to both: because they could not or cannot help it. They differ indeed, in this, that William took from the poor and gave to the rich, and Robin takes from the rich and gives to the poor: and therein is Robin illegitimate: though in all else he is true prince. Scarlet and John, are they not peers of the forest? lords temporal of Sherwood? And am not I lord spiritual? Am I not archbishop? Am I not pope? Do I not consecrate their banner and absolve their sins? Are not they state, and am not I church? Are not they state monarchical, and am not I church militant? Do I not excommunicate our enemies from venison and brawn, and by 'r

[1] 'How does Nature deify us with a few cheap elements! Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous.' EMERSON.—G.

Lady, when need calls, beat them down under my feet? The State levies tax; and the Church levies tithe. Even so do we. Mass, we take all at once. What then? It is tax by redemption and tithe by commutation. Your William and Richard can cut and come again, but our Robin deals with slippery subjects that come not twice to his exchequer. What need we then to constitute a court, except a fool and a laureate? For the fool, his only use is to make false knaves merry by art, and we are true men and are merry by nature. For the laureate, his only office is to find virtues in those who have none, and to drink sack for his pains. We have quite virtue enough to need him not, and can drink our sack for ourselves.'

'Well preached, friar,' said Robin Hood; 'yet there is one thing wanting to constitute a court, and that is a queen. And now, lovely Matilda, look round upon these sylvan shades where we have so often roused the stag from his ferny covert. The rising sun smiles upon us through the stems of that beechen knoll. Shall I take your hand, Matilda, in the presence of this my court? Shall I crown you with our wild-wood coronal, and hail you queen of the forest? Will you be the Queen Matilda of your own true King Robin?'

Matilda smiled assent.

'Not Matilda,' said the friar: 'the rules of our holy alliance require new birth. We have excepted in favour of Little John, because he is great John, and his name is a misnomer. I sprinkle, not thy forehead with water, but thy lips with wine, and baptize thee MARIAN.'

'Here is a pretty conspiracy,' exclaimed the baron. 'Why, you villainous friar, think you to nickname and marry my daughter before my face with impunity?'

'Even so, bold baron,' said the friar; 'we are strongest here. Say you, might overcomes right? I say no. There is no right but might: and to say that might overcomes right is to say that right overcomes itself—an absurdity most palpable. Your right was the stronger in Arlingford, and ours is the stronger in Sherwood. Your right was right as long as you could maintain it; so is ours. So is King Richard's, with all deference be it spoken; and so is King Saladin's; and their two mights are now committed in bloody fray, and that which overcomes will be right, just as long as it lasts, and

as far as it reaches. And, now, if any of you know any just impediment——'

'Fire and fury,' said the baron.

'Fire and fury,' said the friar, 'are modes of that might which constitutes right, and are just impediments to anything against which they can be brought to bear. They are our good allies upon occasion, and would declare for us now if you should put them to the test.'

'Father,' said Matilda, 'you know the terms of our compact. From the moment you restrained my liberty, you renounced your claim to all but compulsory obedience. The friar argues well. Right ends with might. Thick walls, dreary galleries, and tapestried chambers, were indifferent to me while I could leave them at pleasure, but have ever been hateful to me since they held me by force. May I never again have roof but the blue sky, nor canopy but the green leaves, nor barrier but the forest bounds; with the foresters to my train, Little John to my page, Friar Tuck to my ghostly adviser, and Robin Hood to my liege lord. I am no longer Lady Matilda Fitzwater, of Arlingford Castle, but plain Maid Marian, of Sherwood Forest.'

'Long live Maid Marian!' re-echoed the foresters.

'Oh, false girl,' said the baron, 'do you renounce your name and parentage?'

'Not my parentage,' said Marian, 'but my name indeed. Do not all maids renounce it at the altar?'

'The altar?' said the baron. 'Grant me patience! what do you mean by the altar?'

'Pile green turf,' said the friar; 'wreathe it with flowers, and crown it with fruit, and we will show the noble baron what we mean by the altar.'

The foresters did as the friar directed.

'Now, Little John,' said the friar, 'on with the cloak of the Abbot of Doubleflask. I appoint thee my clerk: thou art here duly elected in full mote.'

'I wish you were all in full moat together,' said the baron, 'and smooth wall on both sides.'

'Punnest thou?' said the friar. 'A heinous anti-Christian offence. Why anti-Christian? Because anti-Catholic. Why anti-Catholic? Because anti-Roman. Why anti-Roman? Because Carthaginian. Is not pun from Punic? *punica fides:*

the very quint-essential quiddity of bad faith: double-visaged, double-tongued. He that will make a pun will—— I say no more. Fie on it. Stand forth, clerk. Who is the bride's father?'

'There is no bride's father,' said the baron. 'I am the father of Matilda Fitzwater.'

'There is none such,' said the friar. 'This is the fair Maid Marian. Will you make a virtue of necessity, or will you give laws to the flowing tide? Will you give her, or shall Robin take her? Will you be her true natural father, or shall I commute paternity? Stand forth, Scarlet.'

'Stand back, sirrah Scarlet,' said the baron. 'My daughter shall have no father but me. Needs must when the devil drives.'

'No matter who drives,' said the friar, 'so that, like a well-disposed subject, you yield cheerful obedience to those who can enforce it.'

'Mawd, sweet Mawd,' said the baron, 'will you then forsake your poor old father in his distress, with his castle in ashes, and his enemy in power?'

'Not so, father,' said Marian; 'I will always be your true daughter: I will always love, and serve, and watch, and defend you: but neither will I forsake my plighted love, and my own liege lord, who was your choice before he was mine, for you made him my associate in infancy; and that he continued to be mine when he ceased to be yours, does not in any way show remissness in my duties or falling off in my affections. And though I here plight my troth at the altar to Robin, in the presence of this holy priest and pious clerk, yet—— Father, when Richard returns from Palestine, he will restore you to your barony, and perhaps, for your sake, your daughter's husband to the earldom of Huntingdon: should that never be, should it be the will of fate that we must live and die in the greenwood, I will live and die MAID MARIAN.'[1]

'A pretty resolution,' said the baron, 'if Robin will let you keep it.'

'I have sworn it,' said Robin. 'Should I expose her

[1] 'And therefore is she called Maid Marian,
Because she leads a spotless maiden life,
And shall till Robin's outlaw life have end.'
Old Play.

tenderness to the perils of maternity, when life and death may hang on shifting at a moment's notice from Sherwood to Barnsdale, and from Barnsdale to the seashore? And why should I banquet when my merry men starve? Chastity is our forest law, and even the friar has kept it since he has been here.'

'Truly so,' said the friar; 'for temptation dwells with ease and luxury; but the hunter is Hippolytus, and the huntress is Dian. And now, dearly beloved——'

The friar went through the ceremony with great unction, and Little John was most clerical in the intonation of his responses. After which, the friar sang, and Little John fiddled, and the foresters danced, Robin with Marian, and Scarlet with the baron; and the venison smoked, and the ale frothed, and the wine sparkled, and the sun went down on their unwearied festivity; which they wound up with the following song, the friar leading and the foresters joining chorus:

Oh! bold Robin Hood is a forester good,
As evér drew bow in the merry greenwood:
At his bugle's shrill singing the echoes are ringing,
The wild deer are springing for many a rood:
Its summons we follow, through brake, over hollow,
The thrice-blown shrill summons of bold Robin Hood.

And what eye hath e'er seen such a sweet Maiden Queen,
As Marian, the pride of the forester's green?
A sweet garden-flower, she blooms in the bower,
Where alone to this hour the wild rose has been:
We hail her in duty the queen of all beauty:
We will live, we will die, by our sweet Maiden Queen.

And here's a grey friar, good as heart can desire,
To absolve all our sins as the case may require:
Who with courage so stout, lays his oak-plant about,
And puts to the rout all the foes of his choir;
For we are his choristers, we merry foresters,
Chorusing thus with our militant friar.

And Scarlet doth bring his good yew-bough and string,
Prime minister is he of Robin our king;
No mark is too narrow for Little John's arrow,
That hits a cock sparrow a mile on the wing:
Robin and Mariòn, Scarlet and Little John,
Long with their glory old Sherwood shall ring.

Each a good liver, for well-feathered quiver
Doth furnish brawn, venison, and fowl of the river :
But the best game we dish up, it is a fat bishop :
When his angels we fish up, he proves a free giver :
For a prelate so lowly has angels more holy,
And should this world's false angels to sinners deliver.

Robin and Mariòn, Scarlet and Little John,
Drink to them one by one, drink as ye sing :
Robin and Mariòn, Scarlet and Little John,
Echo to echo through Sherwood shall fling :
Robin and Mariòn, Scarlet and Little John,
Long with their glory old Sherwood shall ring.

CHAPTER XII

'A single volume paramount : a code :
A master spirit ; a determined road.'
WORDSWORTH.

THE next morning Robin Hood convened his foresters, and desired Little John, for the baron's edification, to read over the laws of their forest society. Little John read aloud with a stentorophonic voice.

'At a high court of foresters, held under the greenwood tree, an hour after sunrise, Robin Hood, President ; William Scarlet, Vice-President ; Little John, Secretary : the following articles, moved by Friar Tuck in his capacity of Peer Spiritual, and seconded by Much the Miller, were unanimously agreed to.

'The principles of our society are six : Legitimacy, Equity, Hospitality, Chivalry, Chastity, and Courtesy.

'The articles of Legitimacy are four :

'I. Our government is legitimate, and our society is founded on the one golden rule of right, consecrated by the universal consent of mankind, and by the practice of all ages, individuals, and nations : namely, To keep what we have, and to catch what we can.

'II. Our government being legitimate, all our proceedings shall be legitimate : wherefore we declare war against the whole world, and every forester is by this legitimate declaration legitimately invested with a roving commission, to make lawful prize of everything that comes in his way.

'III. All forest laws but our own we declare to be null and void.

'IV. All such of the old laws of England as do not in any way interfere with, or militate against, the views of this honour-

able assembly, we will loyally adhere to and maintain. The rest we declare null and void as far as relates to ourselves, in all cases wherein a vigour beyond the law may be conducive to our own interest and preservation.

'The articles of Equity are three :

'I. The balance of power among the people being very much deranged, by one having too much and another nothing, we hereby resolve ourselves into a congress or court of equity, to restore as far as in us lies the said natural balance of power, by taking from all who have too much as much of the said too much as we can lay our hands on ; and giving to those who have nothing such a portion thereof as it may seem to us expedient to part with.

'II. In all cases a quorum of foresters shall constitute a court of equity, and as many as may be strong enough to manage the matter in hand shall constitute a quorum.

'III. All usurers, monks, courtiers, and other drones of the great hive of society, who shall be found laden with any portion of the honey whereof they have wrongfully despoiled the industrious bee, shall be rightfully despoiled thereof in turn ; and all bishops and abbots shall be bound and beaten,[1] especially the Abbot of Doncaster ; as shall also all sheriffs, especially the Sheriff of Nottingham.

'The articles of Hospitality are two :

'I. Postmen, carriers and market-folk, peasants and mechanics, farmers and millers, shall pass through our forest dominions without let or molestation.

'II. All other travellers through the forest shall be graciously invited to partake of Robin's hospitality ; and if they come not willingly they shall be compelled ; and the rich man shall pay well for his fare ; and the poor man shall feast scot free, and peradventure receive bounty in proportion to his desert and necessity.

[1] These byshoppes and these archbyshoppes
Ye shall them bete and bynde,

says Robin Hood, in an old ballad. Perhaps, however, this is to be taken not in a literal but in a figurative sense, from the binding and beating of wheat : for as all rich men were Robin's harvest, the bishops and archbishops must have been the finest and fattest ears among them, from which Robin merely proposes to thresh the grain when he directs them to be bound and beaten : and as Pharaoh's fat kine were typical of fat ears of wheat, so may fat ears of wheat, *mutatis mutandis*, be typical of fat kine.

'The article of Chivalry is one:

'I. Every forester shall, to the extent of his power, aid and protect maids, widows, and orphans, and all weak and distressed persons whomsoever: and no woman shall be impeded or molested in any way; nor shall any company receive harm which any woman is in.

'The article of Chastity is one:

'I. Every forester, being Diana's forester and minion of the moon, shall commend himself to the grace of the Virgin, and shall have the gift of continency on pain of expulsion: that the article of chivalry may be secure from infringement, and maids, wives, and widows pass without fear through the forest.

'The article of Courtesy is one:

'I. No one shall miscall a forester. He who calls Robin Robert of Huntingdon, or salutes him by any other title or designation whatsoever except plain Robin Hood; or who calls Marian Matilda Fitzwater, or salutes her by any other title or designation whatsoever except plain Maid Marian; and so of all others; shall for every such offence forfeit a mark, to be paid to the friar.

'And these articles we swear to keep as we are good men and true. Carried by acclamation. God save King Richard. LITTLE JOHN, Secretary.'

'Excellent laws,' said the baron; 'excellent, by the holy rood. William of Normandy, with my great great grandfather Fierabras at his elbow, could not have made better. And now, sweet Mawd——'

'A fine, a fine,' cried the friar, 'a fine, by the article of courtesy.'

'Od's life,' said the baron, 'shall I not call my own daughter Mawd? Methinks there should be a special exception in my favour.'

'It must not be,' said Robin Hood. 'Our constitution admits no privilege.'

'But I will commute,' said the friar; 'for twenty marks a year duly paid into my ghostly pocket, you shall call your daughter Mawd two hundred times a day.'

'Gramercy,' said the baron, 'and I agree, honest friar, when I can get twenty marks to pay; for till Prince John be

beaten from Nottingham, my rents are like to prove but scanty.'

'I will trust,' said the friar, 'and thus let us ratify the stipulation; so shall our laws and your infringement run together in an amiable parallel.'

'But,' said Little John, 'this is a bad precedent, master friar. It is turning discipline into profit, penalty into perquisite, public justice into private revenue. It is rank corruption, master friar.'

'Why are laws made?' said the friar. 'For the profit of somebody. Of whom? Of him who makes them first, and of others as it may happen. Was not I legislator in the last article, and shall I not thrive by my own law?'

'Well then, sweet Mawd,' said the baron, 'I must leave you, Mawd. Your life is very well for the young and the hearty, but it squares not with my age or my humour. I must house, Mawd. I must find refuge: but where? That is the question.'

'Where Sir Guy of Gamwell has found it,' said Robin Hood, 'near the borders of Barnsdale. There you may dwell in safety with him and fair Alice, till King Richard return, and Little John shall give you safe conduct. You will have need to travel with caution, in disguise and without attendants, for Prince John commands all this vicinity, and will doubtless lay the country for you and Marian. Now, it is first expedient to dismiss your retainers. If there be any among them who like our life, they may stay with us in the greenwood; the rest may return to their homes.'

Some of the baron's men resolved to remain with Robin and Marian, and were furnished accordingly with suits of green, of which Robin always kept good store.

Marian now declared that as there was danger in the way to Barnsdale, she would accompany Little John and the baron, as she should not be happy unless she herself saw her father placed in security. Robin was very unwilling to consent to this, and assured her that there was more danger for her than the baron; but Marian was absolute.

'If so, then,' said Robin, 'I shall be your guide instead of Little John, and I shall leave him and Scarlet joint-regents of Sherwood during my absence, and the voice of Friar Tuck

shall be decisive between them if they differ in nice questions of state policy.' Marian objected to this, that there was more danger for Robin than either herself or the baron; but Robin was absolute in his turn.

'Talk not of my voice,' said the friar; 'for if Marian be a damsel errant, I will be her ghostly esquire.'

Robin insisted that this should not be, for number would only expose them to greater risk of detection. The friar, after some debate, reluctantly acquiesced.

While they were discussing these matters, they heard the distant sound of horses' feet.

'Go,' said Robin to Little John, 'and invite yonder horseman to dinner.'

Little John bounded away, and soon came before a young man, who was riding in a melancholy manner, with the bridle hanging loose on the horse's neck, and his eyes drooping towards the ground.

'Whither go you?' said Little John.

'Whithersoever my horse pleases,' said the young man.

'And that shall be,' said Little John, 'whither I please to lead him. I am commissioned to invite you to dine with my master.'

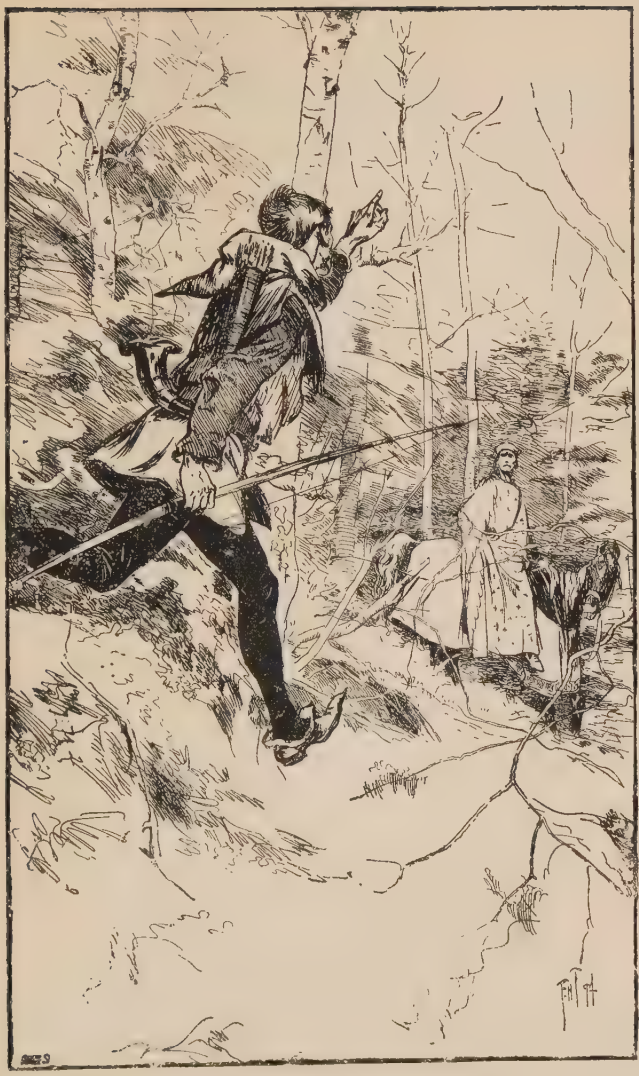
'Who is your master?' said the young man.

'Robin Hood,' said Little John.

'The bold outlaw?' said the stranger. 'Neither he nor you should have made me turn an inch aside yesterday; but to-day I care not.'

'Then it is better for you,' said Little John, 'that you came to-day than yesterday, if you love dining in a whole skin: for my master is the pink of courtesy: but if his guests prove stubborn, he bastes them and his venison together, while the friar says mass before meat.'

The young man made no answer, and scarcely seemed to hear what Little John was saying, who therefore took the horse's bridle and led him to where Robin and his foresters were setting forth their dinner. Robin seated the young man next to Marian. Recovering a little from his stupor, he looked with much amazement at her, and the baron, and Robin, and the friar; listened to their conversation, and seemed much astonished to find himself in such holy and courtly company. Robin helped him largely to numble-pie and cygnet and



"'Whither go you?" said Little John.'

pheasant,[1] and the other dainties of his table; and the friar pledged him in ale and wine, and exhorted him to make good cheer. But the young man drank little, ate less, spake nothing, and every now and then sighed heavily.

When the repast was ended, 'Now,' said Robin, 'you are at liberty to pursue your journey: but first be pleased to pay for your dinner.'

'That would I gladly do, Robin,' said the young man, 'but all I have about me are five shillings and a ring. To the five shillings you shall be welcome, but for the ring I will fight while there is a drop of blood in my veins.'

'Gallantly spoken,' said Robin Hood. 'A love-token, without doubt: but you must submit to our forest laws. Little John must search; and if he find no more than you say, not a penny will I touch; but if you have spoken false, the whole is forfeit to our fraternity.'

'And with reason,' said the friar; 'for thereby is the truth maintained. The Abbot of Doubleflask swore there was no money in his valise, and Little John forthwith emptied it of four hundred pounds. Thus was the abbot's perjury but of one minute's duration; for though his speech was false in the utterance, yet was it no sooner uttered than it became true, and we should have been *participes criminis* to have suffered the holy abbot to depart in falsehood: whereas he came to us a false priest, and we sent him away a true man. Marry, we turned his cloak to further account, and thereby hangs a tale that may be either said or sung: for in truth I am minstrel here as well as chaplain; I pray for good success to our just and necessary warfare, and sing thanksgiving odes when our foresters bring in booty:

Bold Robin has robed him in ghostly attire,
And forth he is gone like a holy friar,
  Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down:
And of two grey friars he soon was aware,
Regaling themselves with dainty fare,
  All on the fallen leaves so brown.

[1] It is somewhat doubtful whether Robin could have helped his guest to pheasant, largely or sparingly, though the bird is said to be mentioned in an English charter of the eleventh century. The first mention of it in an English book is stated to be in *The Forme of Curie*, 1381. –G.

"Good morrow, good brothers," said bold Robin Hood,
"And what make you in good greenwood,
Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down!
Now give me, I pray you, wine and food;
For none can I find in the good greenwood,
All on the fallen leaves so brown."

"Good brother," they said, "we would give you full fain,
But we have no more than enough for twain,
Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down."
"Then give me some money," said bold Robin Hood,
"For none can I find in the good greenwood,
All on the fallen leaves so brown."

"No money have we, good brother," said they:
"Then," said he, "we three for money will pray:
Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down:
And whatever shall come at the end of our prayer,
We three holy friars will piously share,
All on the fallen leaves so brown."

"We will not pray with thee, good brother. God wot:
For truly, good brother, thou pleasest us not,
Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down":
Then up they both started from Robin to run,
But down on their knees Robin pulled them each one,
All on the fallen leaves so brown.

The grey friars prayed with a doleful face,
But bold Robin prayed with a right merry grace,
Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down;
And when they had prayed, their portmanteau he took,
And from it a hundred good angels he shook,
All on the fallen leaves so brown.

"The saints," said bold Robin, "have hearkened our prayer,
And here's a good angel apiece for your share;
If more you would have, you must win ere you wear;
Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down":
Then he blew his good horn with a musical cheer,
And fifty green bowmen came trooping full near,
And away the grey friars they bounded like deer,
All on the fallen leaves so brown.'

CHAPTER XIII

'What can a young lassie, what shall a young lassie,
What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?'

BURNS.

'HERE is but five shillings and a ring,' said Little John, 'and the young man has spoken true.'

'Then,' said Robin to the stranger, 'if want of money be the cause of your melancholy, speak. Little John is my treasurer, and he shall disburse to you.'

'It is, and it is not,' said the stranger; 'it is, because, had I not wanted money I had never lost my love; it is not, because, now that I have lost her, money would come too late to regain her.'

'In what way have you lost her?' said Robin: 'let us clearly know that she is past regaining, before we give up our wishes to restore her to you.'

'She is to be married this day,' said the stranger, 'and perhaps is married by this, to a rich old knight; and yesterday I knew it not.'

'What is your name?' said Robin.

'Allen,' said the stranger.

'And where is the marriage to take place, Allen?' said Robin.

'At Edwinstow church,' said Allen, 'by the Bishop of Nottingham.'

'I know that bishop,' said Robin; 'he dined with me a month since, and paid three hundred pounds for his dinner. He has a good ear and loves music. The friar sang to him to some tune. Give me my harper's cloak, and I will play a part at this wedding.'

'These are dangerous times, Robin,' said Marian, 'for playing pranks out of the forest.'

'Fear not,' said Robin; 'Edwinstow lies not Nottingham-ward, and I will take my precautions.'

Robin put on his harper's cloak, while Little John painted his eyebrows and cheeks, tipped his nose with red, and tied him on a comely beard. Marian confessed, that had she not been present at the metamorphosis, she should not have known her own true Robin. Robin took his harp and went to the wedding.

Robin found the bishop and his train in the church porch, impatiently expecting the arrival of the bride and bridegroom. The clerk was observing to the bishop that the knight was somewhat gouty, and that the necessity of walking the last quarter of a mile from the road to the churchyard probably detained the lively bridegroom rather longer than had been calculated upon.

'Oh! by my fay,' said the music-loving bishop, 'here comes a harper in the nick of time, and now I care not how long they tarry. Ho! honest friend, are you come to play at the wedding?'

'I am come to play anywhere,' answered Robin, 'where I can get a cup of sack; for which I will sing the praise of the donor in lofty verse, and emblazon him with any virtue which he may wish to have the credit of possessing, without the trouble of practising.'

'A most courtly harper,' said the bishop; 'I will fill thee with sack; I will make thee a walking butt of sack, if thou wilt delight my ears with thy melodies.'

'That will I,' said Robin; 'in what branch of my art shall I exert my faculty? I am passing well in all, from the anthem to the glee, and from the dirge to the coranto.'

'It would be idle,' said the bishop, 'to give thee sack for playing me anthems, seeing that I myself do receive sack for hearing them sung. Therefore, as the occasion is festive, thou shalt play me a coranto.'

Robin struck up and played away merrily, the bishop all the while in great delight, noddling his head, and beating time with his foot, till the bride and bridegroom appeared. The bridegroom was richly apparelled, and came slowly and painfully forward, hobbling and leering, and pursing up his mouth into a smile of resolute defiance to the gout, and of tender complacency towards his lady-love, who, shining like

gold at the old knight's expense, followed slowly between her father and mother, her cheeks pale, her head drooping, her steps faltering, and her eyes reddened with tears.

Robin stopped his minstrelsy, and said to the bishop, 'This seems to me an unfit match.'

'What do you say, rascal?' said the old knight, hobbling up to him.

'I say,' said Robin, 'this seems to me an unfit match. What, in the devil's name, can you want with a young wife, who have one foot in flannels and the other in the grave?'

'What is that to thee, sirrah varlet?' said the old knight; 'stand away from the porch, or I will fracture thy sconce with my cane.'

'I will not stand away from the porch,' said Robin, 'unless the bride bid me, and tell me that you are her own true love.'

'Speak,' said the bride's father, in a severe tone, and with a look of significant menace. The girl looked alternately at her father and Robin. She attempted to speak, but her voice failed in the effort, and she burst into tears.

'Here is lawful cause and just impediment,' said Robin, 'and I forbid the banns.'

'Who are you, villain?' said the old knight, stamping his sound foot with rage.

'I am the Roman law,' said Robin, 'which says that there shall not be more than ten years between a man and his wife; and here are five times ten; and so says the law of nature.'

'Honest harper,' said the bishop, 'you are somewhat over-officious here, and less courtly than I deemed you. If you love sack, forbear; for this course will never bring you a drop. As to your Roman law and your law of nature, what right have they to say anything which the law of Holy Writ says not?'

'The law of Holy Writ does say it,' said Robin; 'I expound it so to say; and I will produce sixty commentators to establish my exposition.'

And so saying, he produced a horn from beneath his cloak, and blew three blasts, and threescore bowmen in green came leaping from the bushes and trees; and young Allen was the first among them to give Robin his sword, while Friar Tuck and Little John marched up to the altar. Robin stripped the bishop and clerk of their robes, and put them on the friar and Little John;

and Allen advanced to take the hand of the bride. Her cheeks grew red and her eyes grew bright, as she locked her hand in her lover's and tripped lightly with him into the church.

'This marriage will not stand,' said the bishop, 'for they have not been thrice asked in church.'

'We will ask them seven times,' said Little John, 'lest three should not suffice.'

'And in the meantime,' said Robin, 'the knight and the bishop shall dance to my harping.'

So Robin sat in the church porch and played away merrily, while his foresters formed a ring in the centre of which the knight and bishop danced with exemplary alacrity; and if they relaxed their exertions, Scarlet gently touched them up with the point of an arrow.

The knight grimaced ruefully, and begged Robin to think of his gout.

'So I do,' said Robin; 'this is the true antipodagron; you shall dance the gout away, and be thankful to me while you live. I told you,' he added to the bishop, 'I would play at this wedding; but you did not tell me that you would dance at it. The next couple you marry, think of the Roman law.'

The bishop was too much out of breath to reply; and now the young couple issued from church, and the bride having made a farewell obeisance to her parents, they departed together with the foresters, the parents storming, the attendants laughing, the bishop puffing and blowing, and the knight rubbing his gouty foot, and uttering doleful lamentations for the gold and jewels with which he had so unwittingly adorned and dowered the bride.

CHAPTER XIV

'As ye came from the holy land
Of blessed Walsinghame,
Oh met ye not with my true love,
As by the way ye came?'

Old Ballad.

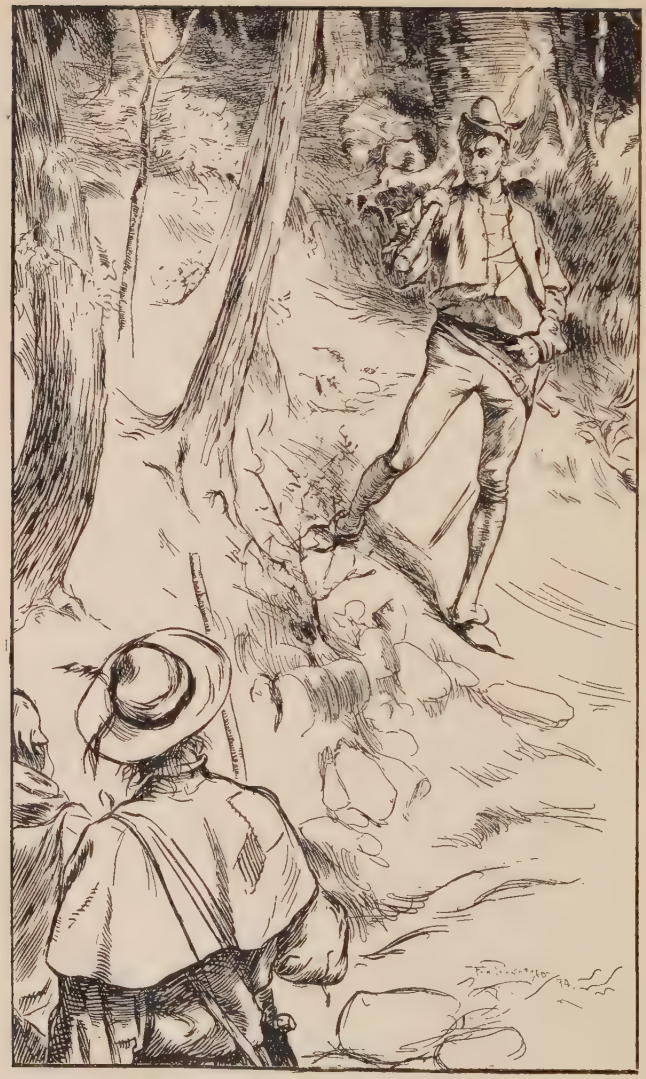
In pursuance of the arrangement recorded in the twelfth chapter, the baron, Robin, and Marian disguised themselves as pilgrims returned from Palestine, and travelling from the sea-coast of Hampshire to their home in Northumberland. By dint of staff and cockle-shell, sandal and scrip, they proceeded in safety the greater part of the way (for Robin had many sly inns and resting-places between Barnsdale and Sherwood), and were already on the borders of Yorkshire, when, one evening, they passed within view of a castle, where they saw a lady standing on a turret, and surveying the whole extent of the valley through which they were passing. A servant came running from the castle, and delivered to them a message from his lady, who was sick with expectation of news from her lord in the Holy Land, and entreated them to come to her, that she might question them concerning him. This was an awkward occurrence: but there was no pretence for refusal, and they followed the servant into the castle. The baron, who had been in Palestine in his youth, undertook to be spokesman on the occasion, and to relate his own adventures to the lady as having happened to the lord in question. This preparation enabled him to be so minute and circumstantial in his detail, and so coherent in his replies to her questions, that the lady fell implicitly into the delusion, and was delighted to find that her lord was alive and in health, and in high favour with the king, and performing prodigies of valour in the name of his lady,

whose miniature he always wore in his bosom. The baron guessed at this circumstance from the customs[1] of that age, and happened to be in the right.

'The miniature,' added the baron, 'I have had the felicity to see, and should have known you by it among a million.' The baron was a little embarrassed by some questions of the lady concerning her lord's personal appearance; but Robin came to his aid, observing a picture suspended opposite to him on the wall, which he made a bold conjecture to be that of the lord in question; and making a calculation of the influences of time and war, which he weighed with a comparison of the lady's age, he gave a description of her lord sufficiently like the picture in its ground-work to be a true resemblance, and sufficiently differing from it in circumstances to be more an original than a copy. The lady was completely deceived, and entreated them to partake her hospitality for the night; but this they deemed it prudent to decline, and with many humble thanks for her kindness, and representations of the necessity of not delaying their homeward course, they proceeded on their way.

As they passed over the drawbridge, they met Sir Ralph Montfaucon and his squire, who were wandering in quest of Marian, and were entering to claim that hospitality which the pilgrims had declined. Their countenances struck Sir Ralph with a kind of imperfect recognition, which would never have been matured, but that the eyes of Marian, as she passed him, encountered his, and the images of those stars of beauty continued involuntarily twinkling in his sensorium to the exclusion of all other ideas, till memory, love, and hope concurred with imagination to furnish a probable reason for their haunting him so pertinaciously. Those eyes, he thought, were certainly the eyes of Matilda Fitzwater; and if the eyes were hers, it was extremely probable, if not logically consecutive, that the rest of the body they belonged to was hers also. Now, if it were really Matilda Fitzwater, who were her two companions? The baron? Ay, and the elder pilgrim was something like him. And the Earl of Huntingdon? Very probably. The earl and the baron might be good friends again, now that they were both in disgrace together. While

[1] Miniatures worn in bosoms and portraits suspended on walls seem to us to savour of the customs of a later age than Robin Hood's.—G.



"*"Whither go you, my masters? there are rogues in that direction."*'

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he was revolving these cogitations, he was introduced to the lady, and after claiming and receiving the promise of hospitality, he inquired what she knew of the pilgrims who had just departed. The lady told him they were newly returned from Palestine, having been long in the Holy Land. The knight expressed some scepticism on this point. The lady replied, that they had given her so minute a detail of her lord's proceedings, and so accurate a description of his person, that she could not be deceived in them. This staggered the knight's confidence in his own pénetration; and if it had not been a heresy in knighthood to suppose for a moment that there could be *in rerum naturâ* such another pair of eyes as those of his mistress, he would have acquiesced implicitly in the lady's judgment. But while the lady and the knight were conversing, the warder blew his bugle-horn, and presently entered a confidential messenger from Palestine, who gave her to understand that her lord was well: but entered into a detail of his adventures most completely at variance with the baron's narrative, to which not the correspondence of a single incident gave the remotest colouring of similarity. It now became manifest that the pilgrims were not true men; and Sir Ralph Montfaucon sate down to supper with his head full of cogitations, which we shall leave him to chew and digest with his pheasant and canary.

Meanwhile our three pilgrims proceeded on their way. The evening set in black and lowering, when Robin turned aside from the main track, to seek an asylum for the night, along a narrow way that led between rocky and woody hills. A peasant observed the pilgrims as they entered that narrow pass, and called after them: 'Whither go you, my masters? there are rogues in that direction.'

'Can you show us a direction,' said Robin, 'in which there are none? If so, we will take it in preference.' The peasant grinned, and walked away whistling.

The pass widened as they advanced, and the woods grew thicker and darker around them. Their path wound along the slope of a woody declivity, which rose high above them in a thick rampart of foliage, and descended almost precipitously to the bed of a small river, which they heard dashing in its rocky channel, and saw its white foam gleaming at intervals in the last faint glimmerings of twilight. In a short time all was

dark, and the rising voice of the wind foretold a coming storm. They turned a point of the valley, and saw a light below them in the depth of the hollow, shining through a cottage-casement and dancing in its reflection on the restless stream. Robin blew his horn, which was answered from below. The cottage door opened; a boy came forth with a torch, ascended the steep, showed tokens of great delight at meeting with Robin, and lighted them down a flight of steps rudely cut in the rock, and over a series of rugged stepping-stones, that crossed the channel of the river. They entered the cottage, which exhibited neatness, comfort, and plenty, being amply enriched with pots, pans, and pipkins, and adorned with flitches of bacon and sundry similar ornaments, that gave goodly promise in the firelight that gleamed upon the rafters. A woman, who seemed just old enough to be the boy's mother, had thrown down her spinning wheel in her joy at the sound of Robin's horn, and was bustling with singular alacrity to set forth her festal ware and prepare an abundant supper. Her features, though not beautiful, were agreeable and expressive, and were now lighted up with such manifest joy at the sight of Robin, that Marian could not help feeling a momentary touch of jealousy, and a half-formed suspicion that Robin had broken his forest law, and had occasionally gone out of bounds, as other great men have done upon occasion, in order to reconcile the breach of the spirit, with the preservation of the letter, of their own legislation. However, this suspicion, if it could be said to exist in a mind so generous as Marian's, was very soon dissipated by the entrance of the woman's husband, who testified as much joy as his wife had done at the sight of Robin; and in a short time the whole of the party were amicably seated round a smoking supper of river-fish and wild wood-fowl, on which the baron fell with as much alacrity as if he had been a true pilgrim from Palestine.

The husband produced some recondite flasks of wine, which were laid by in a binn consecrated to Robin, whose occasional visits to them in his wanderings were the festal days of these warm-hearted cottagers, whose manners showed that they had not been born to this low estate. Their story had no mystery, and Marian easily collected it from the tenor of their conversation. The young man had been, like Robin, the victim of an usurious abbot, and had been outlawed for debt, and his nut-

brown maid had accompanied him to the depths of Sherwood, where they lived an unholy and illegitimate life, killing the king's deer, and never hearing mass. In this state, Robin, then Earl of Huntingdon, discovered them in one of his huntings, and gave them aid and protection. When Robin himself became an outlaw, the necessary qualification or gift of continency was too hard a law for our lovers to subscribe to; and as they were thus disqualified for foresters, Robin had found them a retreat in this romantic and secluded spot. He had done similar service to other lovers similarly circumstanced, and had disposed them in various wild scenes which he and his men had discovered in their flittings from place to place, supplying them with all necessaries and comforts from the reluctant disgorgings of fat abbots and usurers. The benefit was in some measure mutual; for these cottages served him as resting-places in his removals, and enabled him to travel untraced and unmolested; and in the delight with which he was always received he found himself even more welcome than he would have been at an inn; and this is saying very much for gratitude and affection together.[1] The smiles which surrounded him were of his own creation, and he participated in the happiness he had bestowed.

The casements began to rattle in the wind, and the rain to beat upon the windows. The wind swelled to a hurricane, and the rain dashed like a flood against the glass. The boy retired to his little bed, the wife trimmed the lamp, the husband heaped logs upon the fire: Robin broached another flask; and Marian filled the baron's cup, and sweetened Robin's by touching its edge with her lips.

'Well,' said the baron, 'give me a roof over my head, be it never so humble. Your greenwood canopy is pretty and pleasant in sunshine; but if I were doomed to live under it, I should wish it were water-tight.'

'But,' said Robin, 'we have tents and caves for foul weather, good store of wine and venison, and fuel in abundance.'

'Ay, but,' said the baron, 'I like to pull off my boots of a

[1] 'Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an Inn.'
SHENSTONE.—G.

night, which you foresters seldom do, and to ensconce myself thereafter in a comfortable bed. Your beech-root is over-hard for a couch, and your mossy stump is somewhat rough for a bolster.'

'Had you not dry leaves,' said Robin, 'with a bishop's surplice over them? What would you have softer? And had you not an abbot's travelling coat for a coverlet? What would you have warmer?'

'Very true,' said the baron, 'but that was an indulgence to a guest, and I dreamed all night of the Sheriff of Nottingham. I like to feel myself safe,' he added, stretching out his legs to the fire, and throwing himself back in his chair with the air of a man determined to be comfortable. 'I like to feel myself safe,' said the baron.

At that moment the woman caught her husband's arm, and all the party following the direction of her eyes, looked simultaneously to the window, where they had just time to catch a glimpse of an apparition of an armed head, with its plumage tossing in the storm, on which the light shone from within, and which disappeared immediately.

CHAPTER XV

'O knight, thou lack'st a cup of canary. When did I see thee so put down?'—*Twelfth Night.*

SEVERAL knocks, as from the knuckles of an iron glove, were given to the door of the cottage, and a voice was heard entreating shelter from the storm for a traveller who had lost his way. Robin arose and went to the door.

'What are you?' said Robin.

'A soldier,' replied the voice; 'an unfortunate adherent of Longchamp, flying the vengeance of Prince John.'

'Are you alone?' said Robin.

'Yes,' said the voice: 'it is a dreadful night. Hospitable cottagers, pray give me admittance. I would not have asked it but for the storm. I would have kept my watch in the woods.'

'That I believe,' said Robin. 'You did not reckon on this storm when you turned into this pass. Do you know there are rogues this way?'

'I do,' said the voice.

'So do I,' said Robin.

A pause ensued, during which Robin, listening attentively, caught a faint sound of whispering.

'You are not alone,' said Robin. 'Who are your companions?'

'None but the wind and the water,' said the voice, 'and I would I had them not.'

'The wind and the water have many voices,' said Robin, 'but I never before heard them say, "What shall we do?"'

Another pause ensued; after which,

'Look ye, master cottager,' said the voice in an altered

tone, 'if you do not let us in willingly, we will break down the door.'

'Ho! ho!' roared the baron; 'you are become plural, are you, rascals? How many are there of you, thieves? What, I warrant, you thought to rob and murder a poor harmless cottager and his wife, and did not dream of a garrison? You looked for no weapon of opposition but spit, poker, and basting ladle, wielded by unskilful hands: but, rascals, here is short sword and long cudgel in hands well tried in war, wherewith you shall be drilled into cullenders and beaten into mummy.'

No reply was made, but furious strokes from without resounded upon the door. Robin, Marian, and the baron threw by their pilgrim's attire, and stood in arms on the defensive. They were provided with swords, and the cottager gave them bucklers and helmets, for all Robin's haunts were furnished with secret armouries. But they kept their swords sheathed, and the baron wielded a ponderous spear, which he pointed towards the door ready to run through the first that should enter, and Robin and Marian each held a bow with the arrow drawn to its head and pointed in the same direction. The cottager flourished a strong cudgel (a weapon in the use of which he prided himself on being particularly expert), and the wife seized the spit from the fireplace, and held it as she saw the baron hold his spear. The storm of wind and rain continued to beat on the roof and the casement, and the storm of blows to resound upon the door, which at length gave way with a violent crash, and a cluster of armed men appeared without, seemingly not less than twelve. Behind them rolled the stream, now changed from a gentle and shallow river to a mighty and impetuous torrent, roaring in waves of yellow foam, partially reddened by the light that streamed through the open door, and turning up its convulsed surface in flashes of shifting radiance from restless masses of half-visible shadow. The stepping-stones, by which the intruders must have crossed, were buried under the waters. On the opposite bank the light fell on the stems and boughs of the rock-rooted oak and ash tossing and swaying in the blast, and sweeping the flashing spray with their leaves.

The instant the door broke, Robin and Marian loosed their arrows, Robin's arrow struck one of the assailants in the

juncture of the shoulder, and disabled his right arm: Marian's struck a second in the juncture of the knee, and rendered him unserviceable for the night. The baron's long spear struck on the mailed breastplate of a third, and being stretched to its full extent by the long-armed hero, drove him to the edge of the torrent, and plunged him into its eddies, along which he was whirled down the darkness of the descending stream, calling vainly on his comrades for aid, till his voice was lost in the mingled roar of the waters and the wind. A fourth springing through the door was laid prostrate by the cottager's cudgel: but the wife being less dexterous than her company, though an Amazon in strength, missed her pass at a fifth, and drove the point of the spit several inches into the right hand door-post as she stood close to the left, and thus made a new barrier which the invaders could not pass without dipping under it and submitting their necks to the sword: but one of the assailants seizing it with gigantic rage, shook it at once from the grasp of its holder and from its lodgment in the post, and at the same time made good the irruption of the rest of his party into the cottage.

Now raged an unequal combat, for the assailants fell two to one on Robin, Marian, the baron, and the cottager; while the wife, being deprived of her spit, converted everything that was at hand to a missile, and rained pots, pans, and pipkins on the armed heads of the enemy. The baron raged like a tiger, and the cottager laid about him like a thresher. One of the soldiers struck Robin's sword from his hand and brought him on his knee, when the boy, who had been roused by the tumult and had been peeping through the inner door, leaped forward in his shirt, picked up the sword and replaced it in Robin's hand, who instantly springing up, disarmed and wounded one of his antagonists, while the other was laid prostrate under the dint of a brass cauldron launched by the Amazonian dame. Robin now turned to the aid of Marian, who was parrying most dexterously the cuts and slashes of her two assailants, of whom Robin delivered her from one, while a well-applied blow of her sword struck off the helmet of the other, who fell on his knees to beg a boon, and she recognised Sir Ralph Montfaucon. The men who were engaged with the baron and the peasant, seeing their leader subdued, immediately laid down their arms and cried for quarter. The wife

brought some strong rope, and the baron tied their arms behind them.

'Now, Sir Ralph,' said Marian, 'once more you are at my mercy.'

'That I always am, cruel beauty,' said the discomfited lover.

'Odso! courteous knight,' said the baron, 'is this the return you make for my beef and canary, when you kissed my daughter's hand in token of contrition for your intermeddling at her wedding? Heart, I am glad to see she has given you a bloody coxcomb. Slice him down, Mawd! slice him down, and fling him into the river.'

'Confess,' said Marian, 'what brought you here, and how did you trace our steps?'

'I will confess nothing,' said the knight.

'Then confess you, rascal,' said the baron, holding his sword to the throat of the captive squire.

'Take away the sword,' said the squire, 'it is too near my mouth, and my voice will not come out for fear: take away the sword, and I will confess all.' The baron dropped his sword, and the squire proceeded: 'Sir Ralph met you, as you quitted Lady Falkland's castle, and by representing to her who you were, borrowed from her such a number of her retainers as he deemed must ensure your capture, seeing that your familiar the friar was not at your elbow. We set forth without delay, and traced you first by means of a peasant who saw you turn into this valley, and afterwards by the light from the casement of this solitary dwelling. Our design was to have laid an ambush for you in the morning, but the storm and your observation of my unlucky face through the casement made us change our purpose; and what followed you can tell better than I can, being indeed masters of the subject.'

'You are a merry knave,' said the baron, 'and here is a cup of wine for you.'

'Gramercy,' said the squire, 'and better late than never; but I lacked a cup of this before. Had I been pot-valiant, I had held you play.'

'Sir knight,' said Marian, 'this is the third time you have sought the life of my lord and of me, for mine is interwoven with his. And do you think me so spiritless as to believe that I can be yours by compulsion? Tempt me not again, for

the next time shall be the last, and the fish of the nearest river shall commute the flesh of a recreant knight into the fast-day dinner of an uncarnivorous friar. I spare you now, not in pity but in scorn. Yet shall you swear to a convention never more to pursue or molest my lord or me, and on this condition you shall live.'

The knight had no alternative but to comply, and swore, on the honour of knighthood, to keep the convention inviolate. How well he kept his oath we shall have no opportunity of narrating: *Di lui la nostra istoria più non parla.*

CHAPTER XVI

'Carry me over the water, thou fine fellowe.'
Old Ballad.

THE pilgrims, without experiencing further molestation, arrived at the retreat of Sir Guy of Gamwell. They found the old knight a cup too low; partly from being cut off from the scenes of his old hospitality and the shouts of his Nottinghamshire vassals, who were wont to make the rafters of his ancient hall re-echo to their revelry; but principally from being parted from his son, who had long been the better half of his flask and pasty. The arrival of our visitors cheered him up; and finding that the baron was to remain with him, he testified his delight and the cordiality of his welcome by pegging him in the ribs till he made him roar.

Robin and Marian took an affectionate leave of the baron and the old knight; and before they quitted the vicinity of Barnsdale, deeming it prudent to return in a different disguise, they laid aside their pilgrim's attire, and assumed the habits and appurtenances of wandering minstrels.

They travelled in this character safely and pleasantly, till one evening at a late hour they arrived by the side of a river, where Robin, looking out for a mode of passage, perceived a ferry-boat safely moored in a nook on the opposite bank; near which a chimney sending up a wreath of smoke through the thick-set willows, was the only symptom of human habitation; and Robin naturally conceiving the said chimney and wreath of smoke to be the outward signs of the inward ferryman, shouted 'Over!' with much strength and clearness: but no voice replied, and no ferryman appeared. Robin raised his voice, and shouted with redoubled energy, 'Over, Over, O-o-o-over!' A faint echo alone responded 'Over!' and

Plunged him over head and ears in the water.

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again died away into deep silence ; but after a brief interval a voice from among the willows, in a strange kind of mingled intonation that was half a shout half a song, answered :

> Over, over, over, jolly, jolly rover,
> Would you then come over? Over, over, over?
> Jolly, jolly rover, here's one lives in clover :
> Who finds the clover? The jolly, jolly rover.
> He finds the clover, let him then come over,
> The jolly, jolly rover, over, over, over.

'I much doubt,' said Marian, 'if this ferryman do not mean by clover something more than the toll of his ferry-boat.'

'I doubt not,' answered Robin, 'he is a levier of toll and tithe, which I shall put him upon proof of his right to receive, by making trial of his might to enforce.'

The ferryman emerged from the willows and stepped into his boat. 'As I live,' exclaimed Robin, 'the ferryman is a friar.'

'With a sword,' said Marian, 'stuck in his rope girdle.'

The friar pushed his boat off manfully, and was presently half over the river.

'It is Friar Tuck,' said Marian.

'He will scarcely know us,' said Robin ; 'and if he do not, I will break a staff with him for sport.'

The friar came singing across the water : the boat touched the land : Robin and Marian stepped on board : the friar pushed off again.

'Silken doublets, silken doublets,' said the friar : 'slenderly lined, I trow : your wandering minstrel is always poor toll : your sweet angels of voices pass current for a bed and a supper at the house of every lord that likes to hear the fame of his valour without the trouble of fighting for it. What need you of purse or pouch? You may sing before thieves. Pedlars, pedlars : wandering from door to door with the small ware of lies and cajolery : exploits for carpet-knights ; honesty for courtiers ; truth for monks, and chastity for nuns : a good saleable stock that costs the vendor nothing, defies wear and tear, and when it has served a hundred customers is as plentiful and as marketable as ever. But, sirrahs, I'll none of your balderdash. You pass not hence without clink of brass, or I'll knock your musical noddles together till they ring like

a pair of cymbals. That will be a new tune for your minstrelships.'

This friendly speech of the friar ended as they stepped on the opposite bank. Robin had noticed as they passed that the summer stream was low.

'Why, thou brawling mongrel,' said Robin, 'that whether thou be thief, friar, or ferryman, or an ill-mixed compound of all three, passes conjecture, though I judge thee to be simple thief, what barkest thou at thus? Villain, there is clink of brass for thee. Dost thou see this coin? Dost thou hear this music? Look and listen; for touch thou shalt not. My minstrelship defies thee. Thou shalt carry me on thy back over the water, and receive nothing but a cracked sconce for thy trouble.'

'A bargain,' said the friar: 'for the water is low, the labour is light, and the reward is alluring.' And he stooped down for Robin, who mounted his back, and the friar waded with him over the river.

'Now, fine fellow,' said the friar, 'thou shalt carry me back over the water, and thou shalt have a cracked sconce for thy trouble.'

Robin took the friar on his back, and waded with him into the middle of the river, when by a dexterous jerk he suddenly flung him off, and plunged him horizontally over head and ears in the water. Robin waded to shore, and the friar, half swimming and half scrambling, followed.

'Fine fellow, fine fellow,' said the friar, 'now will I pay thee thy cracked sconce.'

'Not so,' said Robin, 'I have not earned it: but thou hast earned it, and shalt have it.'

It was not, even in those good old times, a sight of every day to see a troubadour and a friar playing at singlestick by the side of a river, each aiming with fell intent at the other's coxcomb. The parties were both so skilled in attack and defence that their mutual efforts for a long time expended themselves in quick and loud rappings on each other's oaken staves. At length Robin, by a dexterous feint, contrived to score one on the friar's crown: but in the careless moment of triumph a splendid sweep of the friar's staff struck Robin's out of his hand into the middle of the river, and repaid his crack on the head with a degree of vigour that might have passed the bounds of a jest if Marian had not retarded its descent by catching the friar's arm.

"Fine fellow, fine fellow," said the friar; "now will I pay thee thy cracked sconce."

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'How now, recreant friar,' said Marian; 'what have you to say why you should not suffer instant execution, being detected in open rebellion against your liege lord? Therefore kneel down, traitor, and submit your neck to the sword of the offended law.'

'Benefit of clergy,' said the friar: 'I plead my clergy. And is it you indeed, ye scrapegraces? Ye are well disguised. I knew ye not; by my flask, Robin, jolly Robin, he buys a jest dearly that pays for it with a bloody coxcomb. But here is balm for all bruises, outward and inward. (The friar produced a flask of canary.) Wash thy wound twice and thy throat thrice with this solar concoction, and thou shalt marvel where was thy hurt. But what moved ye to this frolic? Knew ye not that ye could not appear in a mask more fashioned to move my bile than in that of these gilders and lackerers of the smooth surface of worthlessness, that bring the gold of true valour into disrepute, by stamping the baser metal with the fairer impression? I marvelled to find any such given to fighting (for they have an old instinct of self-preservation): but I rejoiced thereat, that I might discuss to them poetical justice: and therefore have I cracked thy sconce: for which, let this be thy medicine.'

'But wherefore,' said Marian, 'do we find you here, when we left you joint lord warden of Sherwood?'

'I do but retire to my devotions,' replied the friar. 'This is my hermitage, in which I first took refuge when I escaped from my beloved brethren of Rubygill; and to which I still retreat at times from the vanities of the world, which else might cling to me too closely, since I have been promoted to be peer-spiritual of your forest-court. For, indeed, I do find in myself certain indications and admonitions that my day has past its noon; and none more cogent than this: that daily of bad wine I grow more intolerent, and of good wine have a keener and more fastidious relish. There is no surer symptom of receding years. The ferryman is my faithful varlet. I send him on some pious errand, that I may meditate in ghostly privacy, when my presence in the forest can best be spared: and when can it be better spared than now, seeing that the neighbourhood of Prince John, and his incessant perquisitions for Marian, have made the forest too hot to hold more of us than are needful to keep up a quorum, and preserve unbroken the continuity of our forest-dominion? For, in truth, without

your greenwood majesties, we have hardly the wit to live in a body, and at the same time to keep our necks out of jeopardy, while that arch-rebel and traitor John infests the precincts of our territory.'

The friar now conducted them to his peaceful cell, where he spread his frugal board with fish, venison, wild-fowl, fruit, and canary. Under the compound operation of this *materia medica* Robin's wounds healed apace, and the friar, who hated minstrelsy, began, as usual, chirping in his cups. Robin and Marian chimed in with his tuneful humour till the midnight moon peeped in upon their revelry.

It was now the very witching time of night, when they heard a voice shouting, 'Over!' They paused to listen, and the voice repeated 'Over!' in accents clear and loud, but which, at the same time, either were in themselves, or seemed to be, from the place and the hour, singularly plaintive and dreary. The friar fidgeted about in his seat: fell into a deep musing: shook himself, and looked about him: first at Marian, then at Robin, then at Marian again; filled and tossed off a cup of canary, and relapsed into his reverie.

'Will you not bring your passenger over?' said Robin. The friar shook his head and looked mysterious.

'That passenger,' said the friar, 'will never come over. Every full moon, at midnight, that voice calls "Over!" I and my varlet have more than once obeyed the summons, and we have sometimes had a glimpse of a white figure under the opposite trees: but when the boat has touched the bank, nothing has been to be seen; and the voice has been heard no more till the midnight of the next full moon.'

'It is very strange,' said Robin.

'Wondrous strange,' said the friar, looking solemn.

The voice again called 'Over!' in a long, plaintive, musical cry.

'I must go to it,' said the friar, 'or it will give us no peace. I would all my customers were of this world. I begin to think that I am Charon, and that this river is Styx.'

'I will go with you, friar,' said Robin.

'By my flask,' said the friar, 'but you shall not.'

'Then I will,' said Marian.

'Still less,' said the friar, hurrying out of the cell. Robin and Marian followed: but the friar outstepped them, and pushed off the boat.

A white figure was visible under the shade of the opposite trees. The boat approached the shore, and the figure glided away. The friar returned.

They re-entered the cottage, and sat some time conversing on the phenomenon they had seen. The friar sipped his wine, and after a time, said:

'There is a tradition of a damsel who was drowned here some years ago. The tradition is——'

But the friar could not narrate a plain tale: he therefore cleared his throat, and sang with due solemnity, in a ghostly voice:

A damsel came in midnight rain,
And called across the ferry;
The weary wight she called in vain.
Whose senses sleep did bury.
At evening, from her father's door
She turned to meet her lover:
At midnight, on the lonely shore,
She shouted, 'Over, over!'

She had not met him by the tree
Of their accustomed meeting,
And sad and sick at heart was she,
Her heart all wildly beating.
In chill suspense the hours went by,
The wild storm burst above her:
She turned her to the river nigh,
And shouted, 'Over, over!

A dim, discoloured, doubtful light
The moon's dark veil permitted,
And thick before her troubled sight
Fantastic shadows flitted.
Her lover's form appeared to glide,
And beckon o'er the water:
Alas! his blood that morn had dyed
Her brother's sword with slaughter.

Upon a little rock she stood,
To make her invocation:
She marked not that the rain-swoll'n flood
Was islanding her station.
The tempest mocked her feeble cry:
No saint his aid would give her:
The flood swelled high and yet more high,
And swept her down the river.

Yet oft beneath the pale moonlight,
When hollow winds are blowing,
The shadow of that maiden bright
Glides by the dark stream's flowing.
And when the storms of midnight rave,
While clouds the broad moon cover,
The wild gusts waft across the wave
The cry of 'Over, over!'

While the friar was singing, Marian was meditating: and when he had ended she said, 'Honest friar, you have misplaced your tradition, which belongs to the estuary of a nobler river, where the damsel was swept away by the rising of the tide, for which your land-flood is an indifferent substitute. But the true tradition of this stream I think I myself possess, and I will narrate it in your own way:

It was a friar of orders free,
A friar of Rubygill:
At the greenwood tree a vow made he,
But he kept it very ill:
A vow made he of chastity,
But he kept it very ill.
He kept it, perchance, in the conscious shade
Of the bounds of the forest wherein it was made:
But he roamed where he listed, as free as the wind,
And he left his good vow in the forest behind:
For its woods out of sight were his vow out of mind,
With the friar of Rubygill.

In lonely hut himself he shut,
The friar of Rubygill;
Where the ghostly elf absolved himself,
To follow his own good will:
And he had no lack of canary sack,
To keep his conscience still,
And a damsel well knew, when at lonely midnight
It gleamed on the waters, his signal-lamp light:
"Over! over!" she warbled with nightingale throat,
And the friar sprang forth at the magical note,
And she crossed the dark stream in his trim ferry-boat,
With the friar of Rubygill.'

'Look you now,' said Robin, 'if the friar does not blush. Many strange sights have I seen in my day, but never till this moment did I see a blushing friar.'

'I think,' said the friar, 'you never saw one that blushed not, or you saw good canary thrown away. But you are welcome to laugh if it so please you. None shall laugh in my company, though it be at my expense, but I will have my share of the merriment. The world is a stage, and life is a farce, and he that laughs most has most profit of the performance. The worst thing is good enough to be laughed at, though it be good for nothing else; and the best thing, though it be good for something else, is good for nothing better.'

And he struck up a song in praise of laughing and quaffing, without further adverting to Marian's insinuated accusation; being, perhaps, of opinion, that it was a subject on which the least said would be the soonest mended.

So passed the night. In the morning a forester came to the friar, with intelligence that Prince John had been compelled, by the urgency of his affairs in other quarters, to disembarrass Nottingham Castle of his Royal presence. Our wanderers returned joyfully to their forest-dominion, being thus relieved from the vicinity of any more formidable belligerent than their old bruised and beaten enemy the Sheriff of Nottingham.

CHAPTER XVII

'Oh! this life
Is nobler than attending for a check,
Richer than doing nothing for a bribe,
Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk.'
Cymbeline.

So Robin and Marian dwelt and reigned in the forest, ranging the glades and the greenwoods from the matins of the lark to the vespers of the nightingale, and administering natural justice according to Robin's ideas of rectifying the inequalities of human condition: raising genial dews from the bags of the rich and idle, and returning them in fertilising showers on the poor and industrious: an operation which more enlightened statesmen have happily reversed, to the unspeakable benefit of the community at large. The light footsteps of Marian were impressed on the morning dew beside the firmer step of her lover, and they shook its large drops about them as they cleared themselves a passage through the thick tall fern, without any fear of catching cold, which was not much in fashion in the twelfth century. Robin was as hospitable as Cathmor; for seven men stood on seven paths to call the strangers to his feast. It is true, he superadded the small improvement of making the stranger pay for it: than which what could be more generous? For Cathmor was himself the prime giver of his feast, whereas Robin was only the agent to a series of strangers, who provided in turn for the entertainment of their successors; which is carrying the disinterestedness of hospitality to its acme. Marian often killed the deer,

Which Scarlet dressed, and Friar Tuck blessed,
While Little John wandered in search of a guest.

Robin was very devout, though there was great unity in his

religion: it was exclusively given to our Lady the Virgin, and he never set forth in a morning till he had said three prayers, and had heard the sweet voice of his Marian singing a hymn to their mutual patroness. Each of his men had, as usual, a patron saint according to his name or taste. The friar chose a saint for himself, and fixed on Saint Botolph, whom he euphonised into Saint Bottle, and maintained that he was that very Panomphic Pantagruelian saint well known in ancient France as a female divinity by the name of La Dive Bouteille, whose oracular monosyllable, 'Trincq,' is celebrated and understood by all nations, and is expounded by the learned Doctor Alcofribas,[1] who has treated at large on the subject, to signify 'drink.' Saint Bottle, then, was the saint of Friar Tuck, who did not yield even to Robin and Marian in the assiduity of his devotions to his chosen patron. Such was their summer life, and in their winter caves they had sufficient furniture, ample provender, store of old wine, and assuredly no lack of fuel, with joyous music and pleasant discourse to charm away the season of darkness and storms.

Many moons had waxed and waned, when on the afternoon of a lovely summer day a lusty, broad-boned knight was riding through the Forest of Sherwood. The sun shone brilliantly on the full green foliage, and afforded the knight a fine opportunity of observing picturesque effects, of which it is to be feared he did not avail himself. But he had not proceeded far before he had an opportunity of observing something much more interesting, namely, a fine young outlaw leaning, in the true Sherwood fashion, with his back against a tree. The knight was preparing to ask the stranger a question, the answer to which, if correctly given, would have relieved him from a doubt that pressed heavily on his mind, as to whether he was in the right road or the wrong, when the youth prevented the inquiry by saying: 'In God's name, sir knight, you are late to your meals. My master has tarried dinner for you these three hours.'

'I doubt,' said the knight, 'I am not he you wot of. I am nowhere bidden to-day, and I know none in this vicinage.'

[1] Alcofribas Nasier: an anagram of François Rabelais, and his assumed appellation.

The reader who desires to know more about this oracular divinity may consult the said Doctor Alcofribas Nasier, who will usher him into the adytum through the medium of the high priestess Bacbuc.

'We feared,' said the youth, 'your memory would be treacherous: therefore am I stationed here to refresh it.'

'Who is your master?' said the knight; 'and where does he abide?'

'My master,' said the youth, 'is called Robin Hood, and he abides hard by.'

'And what knows he of me?' said the knight.

'He knows you,' answered the youth, 'as he does every wayfaring knight and friar, by instinct.'

'Gramercy,' said the knight; 'then I understand his bidding: but how if I say I will not come?'

'I am enjoined to bring you,' said the youth. 'If persuasion avail not, I must use other argument.'

'Say'st thou so?' said the knight; 'I doubt if thy stripling rhetoric would convince me.'

'That,' said the young forester, 'we will see.'

'We are not equally matched, boy,' said the knight. 'I should get less honour by thy conquest, than grief by thy injury.'

'Perhaps,' said the youth, 'my strength is more than my seeming, and my cunning more than my strength. Therefore let it please your knighthood to dismount.'

'It shall please my knighthood to chastise thy presumption,' said the knight, springing from his saddle.

Hereupon, which in those days was usually the result of a meeting between any two persons anywhere, they proceeded to fight.

The knight had in an uncommon degree both strength and skill: the forester had less strength, but not less skill than the knight, and showed such a mastery of his weapon as reduced the latter to great admiration.

They had not fought many minutes by the forest clock, the sun; and had as yet done each other no worse injury than that the knight had wounded the forester's jerkin, and the forester had disabled the knight's plume; when they were interrupted by a voice from a thicket, exclaiming, 'Well fought, girl: well fought. Mass, that had nigh been a shrewd hit. Thou owest him for that, lass. Marry, stand by, I'll pay him for thee.'

The knight turning to the voice, beheld a tall friar issuing from the thicket, brandishing a ponderous cudgel.

'"*I say,*" *answered the knight,* "*that if this be indeed a lady, man never yet held me so long.*"'

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'Who art thou?' said the knight.

'I am the church militant of Sherwood,' answered the friar. 'Why art thou in arms against our lady queen?'

'What meanest thou?' said the knight.

'Truly, this,' said the friar, 'is our liege lady of the forest, against whom I do apprehend thee in overt act of treason. What sayest thou for thyself?'

'I say,' answered the knight, 'that if this be indeed a lady, man never yet held me so long.'

'Spoken,' said the friar, 'like one who hath done execution. Hast thou thy stomach full of steel? Wilt thou diversify thy repast with a taste of my oak-graff? Or wilt thou incline thine heart to our venison, which truly is cooling? Wilt thou fight? or wilt thou dine? or wilt thou fight and dine? or wilt thou dine and fight? I am for thee, choose as thou mayest.'

'I will dine,' said the knight; 'for with lady I never fought before, and with friar I never fought yet, and with neither will I ever fight knowingly: and if this be the queen of the forest, I will not, being in her own dominions, be backward to do her homage.'

So saying, he kissed the hand of Marian, who was pleased most graciously to express her approbation.

'Gramercy, sir knight,' said the friar, 'I laud thee for thy courtesy, which I deem to be no less than thy valour. Now do thou follow me, while I follow my nose, which scents the pleasant odour of roast from the depth of the forest recesses. I will lead thy horse, and do thou lead my lady.'

The knight took Marian's hand, and followed the friar, who walked before them, singing:

> When the wind blows, when the wind blows
> From where under buck the dry log glows,
> What guide can you follow,
> O'er break and o'er hollow,
> So true as a ghostly, ghostly nose?

CHAPTER XVIII

'Robin and Richard were two pretty men.'
Mother Goose's Melody.

THEY proceeded, following their infallible guide, first along a light elastic greensward under the shade of lofty and wide-spreading trees that skirted a sunny opening of the forest, then along labyrinthine paths, which the deer, the outlaw, or the woodman had made, through the close shoots of the young coppices, through the thick undergrowth of the ancient woods, through beds of gigantic fern that filled the narrow glades and waved their green feathery heads above the plume of the knight. Along these sylvan alleys they walked in single file; the friar singing and pioneering in the van, the horse plunging and floundering behind the friar, the lady following 'in maiden meditation fancy-free,' and the knight bringing up the rear, much marvelling at the strange company into which his stars had thrown him. Their path had expanded sufficiently to allow the knight to take Marian's hand again, when they arrived in the august presence of Robin Hood and his court.

Robin's table was spread under a high overarching canopy of living boughs, on the edge of a natural lawn of verdure, starred with flowers, through which a swift transparent rivulet ran, sparkling in the sun. The board was covered with abundance of choice food and excellent liquor, not without the comeliness of snow-white linen and the splendour of costly plate, which the Sheriff of Nottingham had unwillingly contributed to supply, at the same time with an excellent cook, whom Little John's art had spirited away to the forest with the contents of his master's silver scullery.

An hundred foresters were here assembled, over-ready for

their dinner, some seated at the table and some lying in groups under the trees.

Robin made courteous welcome to the knight, who took his seat between Robin and Marian at the festal board; at which was already placed one strange guest in the person of a portly monk, sitting between Little John and Scarlet, with his rotund physiognomy elongated into an unnatural oval by the conjoint influence of sorrow and fear: sorrow for the departed contents of his travelling treasury, a good-looking valise which was hanging empty on a bough; and fear for his personal safety, of which all the flasks and pasties before him could not give him assurance. The appearance of the knight, however, cheered him up with a semblance of protection, and gave him just sufficient courage to demolish a cygnet and a numble-pie, which he diluted with the contents of two flasks of canary sack.

But wine, which sometimes creates and often increases joy, doth also, upon occasion, heighten sorrow: and so it fared now with our portly monk, who had no sooner explained away his portion of provender, than he began to weep and bewail himself bitterly.

'Why dost thou weep, man?' said Robin Hood. 'Thou hast done thine embassy justly, and shalt have thy Lady's grace.'

'Alack! alack!' said the monk: 'no embassy had I, luckless sinner, as well thou wottest, but to take to my abbey in safety the treasure whereof thou hast despoiled me.'

'Propound me his case,' said Friar Tuck, 'and I will give him ghostly counsel.'

'You well remember,' said Robin Hood, 'the sorrowful knight who dined with us here twelve months and a day gone by?'

'Well do I,' said Friar Tuck. 'His lands were in jeopardy with a certain abbot, who would allow no longer day for their redemption. Whereupon you lent to him the four hundred pounds which he needed, and which he was to repay this day, though he had no better security to give than our Lady the Virgin.'

'I never desired better,' said Robin, 'for she never yet failed to send me my pay; and here is one of her own flock, this faithful and well-favoured monk of St. Mary's, hath brought it me duly, principal and interest to a penny, as Little

John can testify, who told it forth. To be sure, he denied having it, but that was to prove our faith. We sought and found it.'

'I know nothing of your knight,' said the monk: 'and the money was our own, as the Virgin shall bless me.'

'She shall bless thee,' said Friar Tuck, 'for a faithful messenger.'

The monk resumed his wailing. Little John brought him his horse. Robin gave him leave to depart. He sprang with singular nimbleness into the saddle, and vanished without saying, God give you good day.

The stranger knight laughed heartily as the monk rode off.

'They say, sir knight,' said Friar Tuck, 'they should laugh who win: but thou laughest who are likely to lose.'

'I have won,' said the knight, 'a good dinner, some mirth, and some knowledge: and I cannot lose by paying for them.'

'Bravely said,' answered Robin. 'Still it becomes thee to pay: for it is not meet that a poor forester should treat a rich knight. How much money hast thou with thee?'

'Troth, I know not,' said the knight. 'Sometimes much, sometimes little, sometimes none. But search, and what thou findest, keep: and for the sake of thy kind heart and open hand, be it what it may, I shall wish it were more.'

'Then, since thou sayest so,' said Robin, 'not a penny will I touch. Many a false churl comes hither, and disburses against his will: and till there is lack of these, I prey not on true men.'

'Thou art thyself a true man, right well I judge, Robin,' said the stranger knight, 'and seemest more like one bred in court than to thy present outlaw life.'

'Our life,' said the friar, 'is a craft, an art, and a mystery. How much of it, think you, could be learned at court?'

'Indeed, I cannot say,' said the stranger knight: 'but I should apprehend very little.'

'And so should I,' said the friar: 'for we should find very little of our bold open practice, but should hear abundance of praise of our principles. To live in seeming fellowship and secret rivalry; to have a hand for all, and a heart for none; to be everybody's acquaintance, and nobody's friend; to meditate the ruin of all on whom we smile, and to dread the secret stratagems of all who smile on us; to pilfer honours and

'Vanished without saying, God give you good day.'

despoil fortunes, not by fighting in daylight, but by sapping in darkness: these are arts which the court can teach, but which we, by 'r Lady, have not learned. But let your court minstrel tune up his throat to the praise of your court hero, then come our principles into play: then is our practice extolled: not by the same name, for their Richard is a hero, and our Robin is a thief: marry, your hero guts an exchequer, while your thief disembowels a portmanteau; your hero sacks a city, while your thief sacks a cellar: your hero marauds on a larger scale, and that is all the difference, for the principle and the virtue are one: but two of a trade cannot agree: therefore your hero makes laws to get rid of your thief, and gives him an ill name that he may hang him: for might is right, and the strong make laws for the weak, and they that make laws to serve their own turn do also make morals to give colour to their laws.'

'Your comparison, friar,' said the stranger, 'fails in this: that your thief fights for profit, and your hero for honour. I have fought under the banners of Richard, and if, as you phrase it, he guts exchequers, and sacks cities, it is not to win treasure for himself, but to furnish forth the means of his greater and more glorious aim.'

'Misconceive me not, sir knight,' said the friar. 'We all love and honour King Richard, and here is a deep draught to his health: but I would show you, that we foresters are miscalled by opprobrious names, and that our virtues, though they follow at humble distance, are yet truly akin to those of Cœur de Lion. I say not that Richard is a thief, but I say that Robin is a hero: and for honour, did ever yet man, miscalled thief, win greater honour than Robin? Do not all men grace him with some honourable epithet? The most gentle thief, the most courteous thief, the most bountiful thief, yea, and the most honest thief. Richard is courteous, bountiful, honest, and valiant, but so also is Robin: it is the false word that makes the unjust distinction. They are twin spirits, and should be friends, but that fortune hath differently cast their lot; but their names shall descend together to the latest days, as the flower of their age and of England; for in the pure principles of freebootery have they excelled all men; and to the principles of freebootery, diversely developed, belong all the qualities to which song and story concede renown.'

'And you may add, friar,' said Marian, 'that Robin, no

less than Richard, is king in his own dominion; and that if his subjects be fewer, yet are they more uniformly loyal.'

'I would, fair lady,' said the stranger, 'that thy latter observation were not so true. But I nothing doubt, Robin, that if Richard could hear your friar, and see you and your lady as I now do, there is not a man in England whom he would take by the hand more cordially than yourself.'

'Gramercy, sir knight,' said Robin—— But his speech was cut short by Little John calling, 'Hark!'

All listened. A distant trampling of horses was heard. The sounds approached rapidly, and at length a group of horsemen glittering in holiday dresses was visible among the trees.

'God's my life!' said Robin, 'what means this? To arms, my merrymen all.'

'No arms, Robin,' said the foremost horseman, riding up and springing from his saddle. 'Have you forgotten Sir William of the Lee?'

'No, by my fay,' said Robin; 'and right welcome again to Sherwood.'

Little John bustled to rearray the disorganised economy of the table, and replace the dilapidations of the provender.

'I come late, Robin,' said Sir William, 'but I came by a wrestling, where I found a good yeoman wrongfully beset by a crowd of sturdy varlets, and I stayed to do him right.'

'I thank thee for that, in God's name,' said Robin, 'as if thy good service had been to myself.'

'And here,' said the knight, 'is thy four hundred pounds; and my men have brought thee an hundred bows and as many well-furnished quivers; which I beseech thee to receive and to use as a poor token of my grateful kindness to thee: for me and my wife and children didst thou redeem from beggary.'

'Thy bows and arrows,' said Robin, 'will I joyfully receive: but of thy money, not a penny. It is paid already. My Lady, who was thy security, hath sent it me for thee.'

Sir William pressed, but Robin was inflexible.

'It is paid,' said Robin, 'as this good knight can testify, who saw my Lady's messenger depart but now.'

Sir William looked round to the stranger knight, and instantly fell on his knees, saying, 'God save King Richard.'

The foresters, friar and all, dropped on their knees together, and repeated in chorus: 'God save King Richard.'

'Rise, rise,' said Richard, smiling: 'Robin is king here, as his lady hath shown. I have heard much of thee, Robin, both of thy present and thy former state. And this, thy fair forest-queen, is, if tales say true, the Lady Matilda Fitzwater.'

Marian signed acknowledgment.

'Your father,' said the king, 'has approved his fidelity to me, by the loss of his lands, which the newness of my return, and many public cares, has not yet given me time to restore: but this justice shall be done to him, and to thee also, Robin, if thou wilt leave thy forest-life and resume thy earldom, and be a peer of Cœur de Lion: for braver heart and juster hand I never yet found.'

Robin looked round on his men.

'Your followers,' said the king, 'shall have free pardon, and such of them as thou wilt part with shall have maintenance from me; and if ever I confess to priest, it shall be to thy friar.'

'Gramercy to your majesty,' said the friar; 'and my inflictions shall be flasks of canary; and if the number be (as in grave cases I may, peradventure, make it) too great for one frail mortality, I will relieve you by vicarious penance, and pour down my own throat the redundancy of the burden.'

Robin and his followers embraced the king's proposal. A joyful meeting soon followed with the baron and Sir Guy of Gamwell: and Richard himself honoured with his own presence a formal solemnisation of the nuptials of our lovers, whom he constantly distinguished with his peculiar regard.

The friar could not say farewell to the forest without something of a heavy heart: and he sang as he turned his back upon its bounds, occasionally reverting his head:

Ye woods, that oft at sultry noon
  Have o'er me spread your massy shade:
Ye gushing streams, whose murmured tune
  Has in my ear sweet music made,
While, where the dancing pebbles show
  Deep in the restless mountain-pool
The gelid water's upward flow,
  My second flask was laid to cool:

Ye pleasant sights of leaf and flower:
  Ye pleasant sounds of bird and bee:
Ye sports of deer in sylvan bower:
  Ye feasts beneath the greenwood tree:

Ye baskings in the vernal sun :
Ye slumbers in the summer dell :
Ye trophies that this arm has won :
And must you hear your friar's farewell?

But the friar's farewell was not destined to be eternal. He was domiciled as the family confessor of the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon, who led a discreet and courtly life, and kept up old hospitality in all its munificence, till the death of King Richard and the usurpation of John, by placing their enemy in power, compelled them to return to their greenwood sovereignty ; which, it is probable, they would have before done from choice, if their love of sylvan liberty had not been counteracted by their desire to retain the friendship of Cœur de Lion. Their old and tried adherents, the friar among the foremost, flocked again round their forest-banner ; and in merry Sherwood they long lived together, the lady still retaining her former name of Maid Marian, though the appellation was then as much a misnomer as that of Little John.

CROTCHET CASTLE

'Should once the world resolve to abolish
All that's ridiculous and foolish,
It would have nothing left to do,
To apply in jest or earnest to.'

BUTLER.

CHAPTER I

THE VILLA

'*Captain Jamy.* I wad full fain hear some question 'tween you tway.'—*Henry V.*

In one of those beautiful valleys, through which the Thames (not yet polluted by the tide, the scouring of cities, or even the minor defilement of the sandy streams of Surrey) rolls a clear flood through flowery meadows, under the shade of old beech woods, and the smooth mossy greensward of the chalk hills (which pour into it their tributary rivulets, as pure and pellucid as the fountain of Bandusium, or the wells of Scamander, by which the wives and daughters of the Trojans washed their splendid garments in the days of peace, before the coming of the Greeks); in one of those beautiful valleys, on a bold round-surfaced lawn, spotted with juniper, that opened itself in the bosom of an old wood, which rose with a steep, but not precipitous ascent, from the river to the summit of the hill, stood the castellated villa of a retired citizen. Ebenezer Mac Crotchet, Esquire, was the London-born offspring of a worthy native of the 'north countrie,' who had walked up to London on a commercial adventure, with all his surplus capital, not very neatly tied up in a not very clean handkerchief, suspended over his shoulder from the end of a hooked stick, extracted from the first hedge on his pilgrimage; and who, after having worked himself a step or two up the ladder of life, had won the virgin heart of the only daughter of a highly respectable merchant of Duke's Place, with whom he inherited the honest fruits of a long series of ingenuous dealings.

Mr. Mac Crotchet had derived from his mother the instinct,

and from his father the rational principle, of enriching himself at the expense of the rest of mankind, by all the recognised modes of accumulation on the windy side of the law. After passing many years in the alley, watching the turn of the market, and playing many games almost as desperate as that of the soldier of Lucullus,[1] the fear of losing what he had so righteously gained, predominated over the sacred thirst of paper-money; his caution got the better of his instinct, or rather transferred it from the department of acquisition to that of conservation. His friend, Mr. Ramsbottom, the zodiacal mythologist, told him that he had done well to withdraw from the region of Uranus or Brahma, the Maker, to that of Saturn or Veeshnu, the Preserver, before he fell under the eye of Jupiter or Seva, the Destroyer, who might have struck him down at a blow.

It is said, that a Scotchman returning home, after some years' residence in England, being asked what he thought of the English, answered: 'They hanna ower muckle sense, but they are an unco braw people to live amang'; which would be a very good story, if it were not rendered apocryphal by the incredible circumstance of the Scotchman going back.

Mr. Mac Crotchet's experience had given him a just title to make, in his own person, the last-quoted observation, but he would have known better than to go back, even if himself, and not his father, had been the first comer of his line from the North. He had married an English Christian, and, having none of the Scotch accent, was ungracious enough to be ashamed of his blood. He was desirous to obliterate alike the Hebrew and Caledonian vestiges in his name, and signed himself E. M. Crotchet, which by degrees induced the majority of his neighbours to think that his name was Edward Matthew. The more effectually to sink the Mac, he christened his villa Crotchet Castle, and determined to hand down to posterity the honours of Crotchet of Crotchet. He found it essential to his dignity to furnish himself with a coat of arms, which, after the proper ceremonies (payment being the principal), he obtained, *videlicet:* Crest, a crotchet rampant, in A sharp; Arms, three empty bladders, turgescent, to show how opinions are formed; three bags of gold, pendent, to show why they are main-

[1] 'Luculli miles,' etc.—Hor. *Ep.* ii. 2, 26. 'In Anna's wars, a soldier poor and bold,' etc.—Pope's *Imitation.*

tained; three naked swords, tranchant, to show how they are administered; and three barbers' blocks, gaspant, to show how they are swallowed.

Mr. Crotchet was left a widower, with two children; and, after the death of his wife, so strong was his sense of the blessed comfort she had been to him, that he determined never to give any other woman an opportunity of obliterating the happy recollection.

He was not without a plausible pretence for styling his villa a Castle, for, in its immediate vicinity, and within his own enclosed domain, were the manifest traces, on the brow of the hill, of a Roman station, or *castellum*, which was still called the Castle by the country people. The primitive mounds and trenches, merely overgrown with greensward, with a few patches of juniper and box on the vallum, and a solitary ancient beech surmounting the place of the prætorium, presented nearly the same depths, heights, slopes, and forms which the Roman soldiers had originally given them. From this *castellum* Mr. Crotchet christened his villa. With his rustic neighbours he was of course immediately and necessarily a squire: Squire Crotchet of the Castle: and he seemed to himself to settle down as naturally into an English country gentleman, as if his parentage had been as innocent of both Scotland and Jerusalem as his education was of Rome and Athens.

But as, though you expel nature with a pitchfork, she will yet always come back;[1] he could not become, like a true-born English squire, part and parcel of the barley-giving earth; he could not find in game-bagging, poacher-shooting, trespasser-pounding, footpath-stopping, common-enclosing, rack-renting, and all the other liberal pursuits and pastimes which make a country gentleman an ornament to the world, and a blessing to the poor; he could not find in these valuable and amiable occupations, and in a corresponding range of ideas, nearly commensurate with that of the great King Nebuchadnezzar when he was turned out to grass; he could not find in this great variety of useful action, and vast field of comprehensive thought, modes of filling up his time that accorded with his Caledonian instinct. The inborn love of disputation, which the excitements and engagements of a life of business had

[1] 'Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.'
HOR. *Ep.* i. 10, 24.

smothered, burst forth through the calmer surface of a rural life. He grew as fain as Captain Jamy 'to hear some airgument betwixt ony tway,' and being very hospitable in his establishment, and liberal in his invitations, a numerous detachment from the advanced guard of the 'march of intellect' often marched down to Crotchet Castle.

When the fashionable season filled London with exhibitors of all descriptions, lecturers and else, Mr. Crotchet was in his glory; for, in addition to the perennial literati of the metropolis, he had the advantage of the visits of a number of hardy annuals, chiefly from the North, who, as the interval of their metropolitan flowering allowed, occasionally accompanied their London brethren in excursions to Crotchet Castle.

Amongst other things, he took very naturally to political economy, read all the books on the subject which were put forth by his own countrymen, attended all lectures thereon, and boxed the technology of the sublime science as expertly as an able seaman boxes the compass.

With this agreeable mania he had the satisfaction of biting his son, the hope of his name and race, who had borne off from Oxford the highest academical honours; and who, treading in his father's footsteps to honour and fortune, had, by means of a portion of the old gentleman's surplus capital, made himself a junior partner in the eminent loan-jobbing firm of Catchflat and Company. Here, in the days of paper prosperity, he applied his science-illumined genius to the blowing of bubbles, the bursting of which sent many a poor devil to the jail, the workhouse, or the bottom of the river, but left young Crotchet rolling in riches.

These riches he had been on the point of doubling, by a marriage with the daughter of Mr. Touchandgo, the great banker, when, one foggy morning, Mr. Touchandgo and the contents of his till were suddenly reported absent; and as the fortune which the young gentleman had intended to marry was not forthcoming, this tender affair of the heart was nipped in the bud.

Miss Touchandgo did not meet the shock of separation quite so complacently as the young gentleman: for he lost only the lady, whereas she lost a fortune as well as a lover. Some jewels, which had glittered on her beautiful person as brilliantly as the bubble of her father's wealth had done in the

eyes of his gudgeons, furnished her with a small portion of paper currency; and this, added to the contents of a fairy purse of gold, which she found in her shoe on the eventful morning when Mr. Touchandgo melted into thin air, enabled her to retreat into North Wales, where she took up her lodging in a farmhouse in Merionethshire, and boarded very comfortably for a trifling payment, and the additional consideration of teaching English, French, and music to the little Ap-Llymrys. In the course of this occupation she acquired sufficient knowledge of Welsh to converse with the country people.

She climbed the mountains, and descended the dingles, with a foot which daily habit made by degrees almost as steady as a native's. She became the nymph of the scene; and if she sometimes pined in thought for her faithless Strephon, her melancholy was anything but green and yellow: it was as genuine white and red as occupation, mountain air, thyme-fed mutton, thick cream, and fat bacon could make it: to say nothing of an occasional glass of double X, which Ap-Llymry,[1] who yielded to no man west of the Wrekin in brewage, never failed to press upon her at dinner and supper. He was also earnest, and sometimes successful, in the recommendation of his mead, and most pertinacious on winter nights in enforcing a trial of the virtues of his elder wine. The young lady's personal appearance, consequently, formed a very advantageous contrast to that of her quondam lover, whose physiognomy the intense anxieties of his bubble-blowing days, notwithstanding their triumphant result, had left blighted, sallowed, and crow's-footed, to a degree not far below that of the fallen spirit who, in the expressive language of German romance, is described as 'scathed by the ineradicable traces of the thunderbolts of heaven'; so that, contemplating their relative geological positions, the poor deserted damsel was flourishing on slate, while her rich and false young knight was pining on chalk.

Squire Crotchet had also one daughter, whom he had christened Lemma, and who, as likely to be endowed with a very ample fortune, was, of course, an object very tempting to many young soldiers of fortune, who were marching with the march of mind, in a good condition for taking castles, as far as not having a groat is a qualification for such exploits.[2] She

[1] Llymry. *Anglicè*, flummery.

[2] 'Let him take castles who has ne'er a groat.'
POPE, *ubi supra.*

was also a glittering bait to divers young squires expectant (whose fathers were too well acquainted with the occult signification of mortgage), and even to one or two sprigs of nobility, who thought that the lining of a civic purse would superinduce a very passable factitious nap upon a threadbare title. The young lady had received an expensive and complicated education; complete in all the elements of superficial display. She was thus eminently qualified to be the companion of any masculine luminary who had kept due pace with the 'astounding progress' of intelligence. It must be confessed that a man who has not kept due pace with it is not very easily found: this march being one of that 'astounding' character in which it seems impossible that the rear can be behind the van. The young lady was also tolerably good-looking: north of Tweed, or in Palestine, she would probably have been a beauty; but for the valleys of the Thames, she was perhaps a little too much to the taste of Solomon, and had a nose which rather too prominently suggested the idea of the tower of Lebanon, which looked towards Damascus.

In a village in the vicinity of the Castle was the vicarage of the Reverend Doctor Folliott, a gentleman endowed with a tolerable stock of learning, an interminable swallow, and an indefatigable pair of lungs. His pre-eminence in the latter faculty gave occasion to some etymologists to ring changes on his name, and to decide that it was derived from Follis Optimus, softened through an Italian medium into Follē Ottimo, contracted poetically into Folleotto, and elided Anglicè into Folliott, signifying a first-rate pair of bellows. He claimed to be descended lineally from the illustrious Gilbert Folliott, the eminent theologian, who was a Bishop of London in the twelfth century, whose studies were interrupted in the dead of night by the devil; when a couple of epigrams passed between them; and the devil, of course, proved the smaller wit of the two.[1]

[1] The devil began (he had caught the bishop musing on politics):

O Gilberte Folliot!
Dum revolvis tot et tot,
Deus tuus est Astarot.

O Gilbert Folliott!
While thus you muse and plot,
Your god is Astarot.

This reverend gentleman, being both learned and jolly, became by degrees an indispensable ornament to the new squire's table. Mr. Crotchet himself was eminently jolly, though by no means eminently learned. In the latter respect he took after the great majority of the sons of his father's land; had a smattering of many things, and a knowledge of none; but possessed the true Northern art of making the most of his intellectual harlequin's jacket, by keeping the best patches always bright and prominent.

The bishop answered:

> Tace, dæmon: qui est deus
> Sabbaot, est ille meus.
>
> Peace, fiend; the power I own
> Is Sabbaoth's Lord alone.

It must be confessed, the devil was easily posed in the twelfth century. He was a sturdier disputant in the sixteenth.

> Did not the devil appear to Martin
> Luther in Germany for certain?

when 'the heroic student,' as Mr. Coleridge calls him, was forced to proceed to '*voies de fait.*' The curious may see at this day, on the wall of Luther's study, the traces of the ink-bottle which he threw at the devil's head.

CHAPTER II

THE MARCH OF MIND

'Quoth Ralpho: nothing but the abuse
Of human learning you produce.'

BUTLER.

'GOD bless my soul, sir!' exclaimed the Reverend Doctor Folliott, bursting, one fine May morning, into the breakfast-room at Crotchet Castle, 'I am out of all patience with this march of mind. Here has my house been nearly burned down, by my cook taking it into her head to study hydrostatics, in a sixpenny tract, published by the Steam Intellect Society, and written by a learned friend who is for doing all the world's business as well as his own, and is equally well qualified to handle every branch of human knowledge. I have a great abomination of this learned friend; as author, lawyer, and politician, he is *triformis*, like Hecate: and in every one of his three forms he is *bifrons*, like Janus; the true Mr. Facing-both-ways of Vanity Fair. My cook must read his rubbish in bed; and as might naturally be expected, she dropped suddenly fast asleep, overturned the candle, and set the curtains in a blaze. Luckily, the footman went into the room at the moment, in time to tear down the curtains and throw them into the chimney, and a pitcher of water on her night-cap extinguished her wick: she is a greasy subject, and would have burned like a short mould.'

The reverend gentleman exhaled his grievance without looking to the right or to the left; at length, turning on his pivot, he perceived that the room was full of company, consisting of young Crotchet and some visitors whom he had brought from London. The Reverend Doctor Folliott was introduced to Mr.

Mac Quedy,[1] the economist; Mr. Skionar,[2] the transcendental poet; Mr. Firedamp, the meteorologist; and Lord Bossnowl, son of the Earl of Foolincourt, and member for the borough of Rogueingrain.

The divine took his seat at the breakfast-table, and began to compose his spirits by the gentle sedative of a large cup of tea, the demulcent of a well-buttered muffin, and the tonic of a small lobster.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

You are a man of taste, Mr. Crotchet. A man of taste is seen at once in the array of his breakfast-table. It is the foot of Hercules, the far-shining face of the great work, according to Pindar's doctrine: ἀρχομένου ἔργου πρόσωπον χρὴ θέμεν τηλαυγές.[3] The breakfast is the πρόσωπον of the great work of the day. Chocolate, coffee, tea, cream, eggs, ham, tongue, cold fowl, all these are good, and bespeak good knowledge in him who sets them forth: but the touchstone is fish: anchovy is the first step, prawns and shrimps the second; and I laud him who reaches even to these: potted char and lampreys are the third, and a fine stretch of progression; but lobster is, indeed, matter for a May morning, and demands a rare combination of knowledge and virtue in him who sets it forth.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Well, sir, and what say you to a fine fresh trout, hot and dry, in a napkin? or a herring out of the water into the frying pan, on the shore of Loch Fyne?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, I say every nation has some eximious virtue; and your country is pre-eminent in the glory of fish for breakfast. We have much to learn from you in that line at any rate.

[1] Quasi Mac Q. E. D., son of a demonstration.

[2] ΣΚΙᾶς ΟΝΑΡ. *Umbræ somnium.*

[3] 'Far-shining be the face
Of a great work begun.'
PIND. *Ol.* vi.

MR. MAC QUEDY

And in many others, sir, I believe. Morals and metaphysics, politics and political economy, the way to make the most of all the modifications of smoke; steam, gas, and paper currency; you have all these to learn from us; in short, all the arts and sciences. We are the modern Athenians.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I, for one, sir, am content to learn nothing from you but the art and science of fish for breakfast. Be content, sir, to rival the Bœotians, whose redeeming virtue was in fish, touching which point you may consult Aristophanes and his scholiast in the passage of Lysistrata, ἀλλ' ἄφελε τὰς ἐγχέλεις,[1] and leave the name of Athenians to those who have a sense of the beautiful, and a perception of metrical quantity.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Then, sir, I presume you set no value on the right principles of rent, profit, wages, and currency?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

My principles, sir, in these things are, to take as much as I can get, and to pay no more than I can help. These are every man's principles, whether they be the right principles or no. There, sir, is political economy in a nutshell.

MR. MAC QUEDY

The principles, sir, which regulate production and consumption are independent of the will of any individual as to giving or taking, and do not lie in a nutshell by any means.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, I will thank you for a leg of that capon.

[1] Calonice wishes destruction to all Bœotians. Lysistrata answers, '*Except the eels.*'—*Lysistrata*, 36.

LORD BOSSNOWL

But, sir, by the bye, how came your footman to be going into your cook's room? It was very providential to be sure, but——

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, as good came of it, I shut my eyes, and asked no questions. I suppose he was going to study hydrostatics, and he found himself under the necessity of practising hydraulics.

MR. FIREDAMP

Sir, you seem to make very light of science.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Yes, sir, such science as the learned friend deals in: everything for everybody, science for all, schools for all, rhetoric for all, law for all, physic for all, words for all, and sense for none. I say, sir, law for lawyers, and cookery for cooks: and I wish the learned friend, for all his life, a cook that will pass her time in studying his works; then every dinner he sits down to at home, he will sit on the stool of repentance.

LORD BOSSNOWL

Now really that would be too severe: my cook should read nothing but Ude.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No, sir! let Ude and the learned friend singe fowls together; let both avaunt from my kitchen. Θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε βεβήλοις.[1] Ude says an elegant supper may be given with sandwiches. *Horresco referens.* An elegant supper. *Dî meliora piis.* No Ude for me. Conviviality went out with punch and suppers. I cherish their memory. I sup when I can, but not upon sandwiches. To offer me a sandwich, when I am looking for a supper, is to add insult to injury. Let the learned friend, and the modern Athenians, sup upon sandwiches.

[1] 'Shut the doors against the profane.'—ORPHICA, *passim*.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Nay, sir; the modern Athenians know better than that. A literary supper in sweet Edinbroo' would cure you of the prejudice you seem to cherish against us.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Well, sir, well; there is cogency in a good supper; a good supper in these degenerate days, bespeaks a good man; but much more is wanted to make up an Athenian. Athenians, indeed! where is your theatre? who among you has written a comedy? where is your Attic salt? which of you can tell who was Jupiter's great grandfather? or what metres will successively remain, if you take off the three first syllables, one by one, from a pure antispastic acatalectic tetrameter? Now, sir, there are three questions for you; theatrical, mythological, and metrical; to every one of which an Athenian would give an answer that would lay me prostrate in my own nothingness.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Well, sir, as to your metre and your mythology, they may e'en wait a wee. For your comedy, there is the *Gentle Shepherd* of the divine Allan Ramsay.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

The *Gentle Shepherd!* It is just as much a comedy as the Book of Job.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Well, sir, if none of us have written a comedy, I cannot see that it is any such great matter, any more than I can conjecture what business a man can have at this time of day with Jupiter's great-grandfather.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

The great business is, sir, that you call yourselves Athenians, while you know nothing that the Athenians thought

worth knowing, and dare not show your noses before the civilised world in the practice of any one art in which they were excellent. Modern Athens, sir! the assumption is a personal affront to every man who has a Sophocles in his library. I will thank you for an anchovy.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Metaphysics, sir; metaphysics. Logic and moral philosophy. There we are at home. The Athenians only sought the way, and we have found it; and to all this we have added political economy, the science of sciences.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

A hyperbarbarous technology, that no Athenian ear could have borne. Premises assumed without evidence, or in spite of it; and conclusions drawn from them so logically, that they must necessarily be erroneous.

MR. SKIONAR

I cannot agree with you, Mr. Mac Quedy, that you have found the true road of metaphysics, which the Athenians only sought. The Germans have found it, sir: the sublime Kant, and his disciples.

MR. MAC QUEDY

I have read the sublime Kant, sir, with an anxious desire to understand him, and I confess I have not succeeded.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

He wants the two great requisites of head and tail.

MR. SKIONAR

Transcendentalism is the philosophy of intuition, the development of universal convictions; truths which are inherent in the organisation of mind, which cannot be obliterated, though they may be obscured, by superstitious prejudice on the one hand, and by the Aristotelian logic on the other.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Well, sir, I have no notion of logic obscuring a question.

MR. SKIONAR

There is only one true logic, which is the transcendental; and this can prove only the one true philosophy, which is also the transcendental. The logic of your Modern Athens can prove everything equally; and that is, in my opinion, tantamount to proving nothing at all.

MR. CROTCHET

The sentimental against the rational, the intuitive against the inductive, the ornamental against the useful, the intense against the tranquil, the romantic against the classical; these are great and interesting controversies, which I should like, before I die, to see satisfactorily settled.

MR. FIREDAMP

There is another great question, greater than all these, seeing that it is necessary to be alive in order to settle any question; and this is the question of water against human life. Wherever there is water, there is *malaria*, and wherever there is *malaria*, there are the elements of death. The great object of a wise man should be to live on a gravelly hill, without so much as a duck-pond within ten miles of him, eschewing cisterns and water-butts, and taking care that there be no gravel-pits for lodging the rain. The sun sucks up infection from water, wherever it exists on the face of the earth.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Well, sir, you have for you the authority of the ancient mystagogue, who said: Ἐστιν ὕδωρ ψυχῇ θάνατος.[1] For my part I care not a rush (or any other aquatic and inesculent vegetable) who or what sucks up either the water or the

[1] Literally, which is sufficient for the present purpose, 'Water is death to the soul.'—ORPHICA, *Fr.* xix.

infection. I think the proximity of wine a matter of much more importance than the longinquity of water. You are here within a quarter of a mile of the Thames, but in the cellar of my friend, Mr. Crotchet, there is the talismanic antidote of a thousand dozen of old wine; a beautiful spectacle, I assure you, and a model of arrangement.

MR. FIREDAMP

Sir, I feel the malignant influence of the river in every part of my system. Nothing but my great friendship for Mr. Crotchet would have brought me so nearly within the jaws of the lion.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

After dinner, sir, after dinner, I will meet you on this question. I shall then be armed for the strife. You may fight like Hercules against Achelous, but I shall flourish the Bacchic thyrsus, which changed rivers into wine: as Nonnus sweetly sings, Οἴνῳ κυματόεντι μέλας κελάρυζεν Ὑδάσπης.[1]

MR. CROTCHET JUN.

I hope, Mr. Firedamp, you will let your friendship carry you a little closer into the jaws of the lion. I am fitting up a flotilla of pleasure-boats, with spacious cabins, and a good cellar, to carry a choice philosophical party up the Thames and Severn, into the Ellesmere canal, where we shall be among the mountains of North Wales; which we may climb or not, as we think proper; but we will, at any rate, keep our floating hotel well provisioned, and we will try to settle all the questions over which a shadow of doubt yet hangs in the world of philosophy.

MR. FIREDAMP

Out of my great friendship for you, I will certainly go; but I do not expect to survive the experiment.

[1] 'Hydaspes gurgled, dark with billowy wine.'
Dionysiaca, xxv. 280.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Alter erit tum Tiphys, et altera quæ vehat Argo Delectos Heroas.[1] I will be of the party, though I must hire an officiating curate, and deprive poor dear Mrs. Folliott, for several weeks, of the pleasure of combing my wig.

LORD BOSSNOWL

I hope, if I am to be of the party, our ship is not to be the ship of fools: He! He!

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

If you are one of the party, sir, it most assuredly will not: Ha! Ha!

LORD BOSSNOWL

Pray, sir, what do you mean by Ha! Ha!?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Precisely, sir, what you mean by He! He!

MR. MAC QUEDY

You need not dispute about terms; they are two modes of expressing merriment, with or without reason; reason being in no way essential to mirth. No man should ask another why he laughs, or at what, seeing that he does not always know, and that, if he does, he is not a responsible agent. Laughter is an involuntary action of certain muscles, developed in the human species by the progress of civilisation. The savage never laughs.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No, sir, he has nothing to laugh at. Give him Modern Athens, the 'learned friend,' and the Steam Intellect Society. They will develop his muscles.

[1] 'Another Tiphys on the waves shall float,
And chosen heroes freight his glorious boat.'
VIRG. *Ecl.* iv.

'The young stranger rose up, and hoped that he was not trespassing.'

CHAPTER III

THE ROMAN CAMP

'He loved her more then seven yere,
Yet was he of her love never the nere;
He was not ryche of golde and fe,
A gentyll man forsoth was he.'
The Squyr of Lowe Degre.

THE Reverend Doctor Folliott having promised to return to dinner, walked back to his vicarage, meditating whether he should pass the morning in writing his next sermon, or in angling for trout, and had nearly decided in favour of the latter proposition, repeating to himself, with great unction, the lines of Chaucer:

And as for me, though that I can but lite,
On bokis for to read I me delite,
And to 'hem yeve I faithe and full credence,
And in mine herte have 'hem in reverence,
So hertily, that there is gamē none,
That fro my bokis makith me to gone,
But it be seldome, on the holie daie;
Save certainly whan that the month of Maie
Is comin, and I here the foulis sing,
And that the flouris ginnin for to spring,
Farwell my boke and my devocion:

when his attention was attracted by a young gentleman who was sitting on a camp-stool with a portfolio on his knee, taking a sketch of the Roman camp, which, as has been already said, was within the enclosed domain of Mr. Crotchet. The young stranger, who had climbed over the fence, espying the portly divine, rose up, and hoped that he was not trespassing. 'By no means, sir,' said the divine, 'all the arts and sciences are

welcome here ; music, painting, and poetry ; hydrostatics, and political economy ; meteorology, transcendentalism, and fish for breakfast.'

THE STRANGER

A pleasant association, sir, and a liberal and discriminating hospitality. This is an old British camp, I believe, sir?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Roman, sir ; Roman : undeniably Roman. The vallum is past controversy. It was not a camp, sir, a *castrum*, but a *castellum*, a little camp, or watch-station, to which was attached, on the peak of the adjacent hill, a beacon for transmitting alarms. You will find such here and there, all along the range of chalk hills, which traverses the country from north-east to south-west, and along the base of which runs the ancient Ikenild road, whereof you may descry a portion in that long straight white line.

THE STRANGER

I beg your pardon, sir : do I understand this place to be your property ?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

It is not mine, sir : the more is the pity ; yet is it so far well, that the owner is my good friend, and a highly respectable gentleman.

THE STRANGER

Good and respectable, sir, I take it, mean rich ?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

That is their meaning, sir.

THE STRANGER

I understand the owner to be a Mr. Crotchet. He has a handsome daughter, I am told.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

He has, sir. Her eyes are like the fish-pools of Heshbon, by the gate of Bethrabbim; and she is to have a handsome fortune, to which divers disinterested gentlemen are paying their addresses. Perhaps you design to be one of them.

THE STRANGER

No, sir; I beg pardon if my questions seem impertinent; I have no such design. There is a son too, I believe, sir, a great and successful blower of bubbles?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

A hero, sir, in his line. Never did angler in September hook more gudgeons.

THE STRANGER

To say the truth, two very amiable young people, with whom I have some little acquaintance, Lord Bossnowl, and his sister, Lady Clarinda, are reported to be on the point of concluding a double marriage with Miss Crotchet and her brother; by way of putting a new varnish on old nobility. Lord Foolincourt, their father, is terribly poor for a lord who owns a borough.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Well, sir, the Crotchets have plenty of money, and the old gentleman's weak point is a hankering after high blood. I saw your acquaintance, Lord Bossnowl, this morning, but I did not see his sister. She may be there, nevertheless, and doing fashionable justice to this fine May morning, by lying in bed till noon.

THE STRANGER

Young Mr. Crotchet, sir, has been, like his father, the architect of his own fortune, has he not? An illustrious example of the reward of honesty and industry?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

As to honesty, sir, he made his fortune in the city of London, and if that commodity be of any value there, you will find it in the price current. I believe it is below par, like the shares of young Crotchet's fifty companies. But his progress has not been exactly like his father's. It has been more rapid, and he started with more advantages. He began with a fine capital from his father. The old gentleman divided his fortune into three not exactly equal portions; one for himself, one for his daughter, and one for his son, which he handed over to him, saying, 'Take it once for all, and make the most of it; if you lose it where I won it, not another stiver do you get from me during my life.' But, sir, young Crotchet doubled, and trebled, and quadrupled it, and is, as you say, a striking example of the reward of industry; not that I think his labour has been so great as his luck.

THE STRANGER

But, sir, is all this solid? is there no danger of reaction? no day of reckoning to cut down in an hour prosperity that has grown up like a mushroom?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Nay, sir, I know not. I do not pry into these matters. I am, for my own part, very well satisfied with the young gentleman. Let those who are not so look to themselves. It is quite enough for me that he came down last night from London, and that he had the good sense to bring with him a basket of lobsters. Sir, I wish you a good morning.

The stranger having returned the reverend gentleman's good morning, resumed his sketch, and was intently employed on it when Mr. Crotchet made his appearance, with Mr. Mac Quedy and Mr. Skionar, whom he was escorting round his grounds, according to his custom with new visitors; the principal pleasure of possessing an extensive domain being that of showing it to other people. Mr. Mac Quedy, according also to the laudable custom of his countrymen, had been

appraising everything that fell under his observation; but, on arriving at the Roman camp, of which the value was purely imaginary, he contented himself with exclaiming: 'Eh! this is just a curiosity, and very pleasant to sit in on a summer day.'

MR. SKIONAR

And call up the days of old, when the Roman eagle spread its wings in the place of that beechen foliage. It gives a fine idea of duration, to think that that fine old tree must have sprung from the earth ages after this camp was formed.

MR. MAC QUEDY

How old, think you, may the tree be?

MR. CROTCHET

I have records which show it to be three hundred years old.

MR. MAC QUEDY

That is a great age for a beech in good condition. But you see the camp is some fifteen hundred years, or so, older; and three times six being eighteen, I think you get a clearer idea of duration out of the simple arithmetic, than out of your eagle and foliage.

MR. SKIONAR

That is a very unpoetical, if not unphilosophical, mode of viewing antiquities. Your philosophy is too literal for our imperfect vision. We cannot look directly into the nature of things; we can only catch glimpses of the mighty shadow in the camera obscura of transcendental intelligence. These six and eighteen are only words to which we give conventional meanings. We can reason, but we cannot feel, by help of them. The tree and the eagle, contemplated in the ideality of space and time, become subjective realities, that rise up as landmarks in the mystery of the past.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Well, sir, if you understand that, I wish you joy. But I must be excused for holding that my proposition, three times six are eighteen, is more intelligible than yours. A worthy friend of mine, who is a sort of amateur in philosophy, criticism, politics, and a wee bit of many things more, says: 'Men never begin to study antiquities till they are saturated with civilisation.'[1]

MR. SKIONAR

What is civilisation?

MR. MAC QUEDY

It is just respect for property. A state in which no man takes wrongfully what belongs to another, is a perfectly civilised state.

MR. SKIONAR

Your friend's antiquaries must have lived in El Dorado, to have had an opportunity of being saturated with such a state.

MR. MAC QUEDY

It is a question of degree. There is more respect for property here than in Angola.

MR. SKIONAR

That depends on the light in which things are viewed.

Mr. Crotchet was rubbing his hands, in hopes of a fine discussion, when they came round to the side of the camp where the picturesque gentleman was sketching. The stranger was rising up, when Mr. Crotchet begged him not to disturb himself, and presently walked away with his two guests.

Shortly after, Miss Crotchet and Lady Clarinda, who had breakfasted by themselves, made their appearance at the same spot, hanging each on an arm of Lord Bossnowl, who very much preferred their company to that of the philosophers,

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, somewhere.

'*The captain offered his left arm to Lady Clarinda, and followed at a reasonable distance.*'

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though he would have preferred the company of the latter, or any company, to his own. He thought it very singular that so agreeable a person as he held himself to be to others, should be so exceedingly tiresome to himself: he did not attempt to investigate the cause of this phenomenon, but was contented with acting on his knowledge of the fact, and giving himself as little of his own private society as possible.

The stranger rose as they approached, and was immediately recognised by the Bossnowls as an old acquaintance, and saluted with the exclamation of 'Captain Fitzchrome!' The interchange of salutation between Lady Clarinda and the captain was accompanied with an amiable confusion on both sides, in which the observant eyes of Miss Crotchet seemed to read the recollection of an affair of the heart.

Lord Bossnowl was either unconscious of any such affair, or indifferent to its existence. He introduced the captain very cordially to Miss Crotchet; and the young lady invited him, as the friend of their guests, to partake of her father's hospitality, an offer which was readily accepted.

The captain took his portfolio under his right arm, his camp-stool in his right hand, offered his left arm to Lady Clarinda, and followed at a reasonable distance behind Miss Crotchet and Lord Bossnowl, contriving, in the most natural manner possible, to drop more and more into the rear.

LADY CLARINDA

I am glad to see you can make yourself so happy with drawing old trees and mounds of grass.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Happy, Lady Clarinda! oh no! How can I be happy when I see the idol of my heart about to be sacrificed on the shrine of Mammon?

LADY CLARINDA

Do you know, though Mammon has a sort of ill name, I really think he is a very popular character; there must be at the bottom something amiable about him. He is certainly one of those pleasant creatures whom everybody abuses, but with-

out whom no evening party is endurable. I daresay, love in a cottage is very pleasant; but then it positively must be a cottage *ornée*: but would not the same love be a great deal safer in a castle, even if Mammon furnished the fortification?

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Oh, Lady Clarinda! there is a heartlessness in that language that chills me to the soul.

LADY CLARINDA

Heartlessness! No: my heart is on my lips. I speak just what I think. You used to like it, and say it was as delightful as it was rare.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

True, but you did not then talk as you do now, of love in a castle.

LADY CLARINDA

Well, but only consider: a dun is a horridly vulgar creature; it is a creature I cannot endure the thought of: and a cottage lets him in so easily. Now a castle keeps him at bay. You are a half-pay officer, and are at leisure to command the garrison: but where is the castle? and who is to furnish the commissariat?

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Is it come to this, that you make a jest of my poverty? Yet is my poverty only comparative. Many decent families are maintained on smaller means.

LADY CLARINDA

Decent families: ay, decent is the distinction from respectable. Respectable means rich, and decent means poor. I should die if I heard my family called decent. And then your decent family always lives in a snug little place: I hate a little place; I like large rooms and large looking-glasses, and large parties, and a fine large butler, with a tinge of smooth red

in his face; an outward and visible sign that the family he serves is respectable; if not noble, highly respectable.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

I cannot believe that you say all this in earnest. No man is less disposed than I am to deny the importance of the substantial comforts of life. I once flattered myself that in our estimate of these things we were nearly of a mind.

LADY CLARINDA

Do you know, I think an opera-box a very substantial comfort, and a carriage? You will tell me that many decent people walk arm in arm through the snow, and sit in clogs and bonnets in the pit at the English theatre. No doubt it is very pleasant to those who are used to it; but it is not to my taste.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

You always delighted in trying to provoke me; but I cannot believe that you have not a heart.

LADY CLARINDA

You do not like to believe that I have a heart, you mean. You wish to think I have lost it, and you know to whom; and when I tell you that it is still safe in my own keeping, and that I do not mean to give it away, the unreasonable creature grows angry.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Angry! far from it: I am perfectly cool.

LADY CLARINDA

Why you are pursing your brows, biting your lips, and lifting up your foot as if you would stamp it into the earth. I must say anger becomes you; you would make a charming Hotspur. Your every-day-dining-out face is rather insipid: but I assure you my heart is in danger when you are in the

heroics. It is so rare too, in these days of smooth manners, to see anything like natural expression in a man's face. There is one set form for every man's face in female society: a sort of serious comedy, walking gentleman's face: but the moment the creature falls in love, he begins to give himself airs, and plays off all the varieties of his physiognomy from the Master Slender to the Petruchio; and then he is actually very amusing.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Well, Lady Clarinda, I will not be angry, amusing as it may be to you: I listen more in sorrow than in anger. I half believe you in earnest: and mourn as over a fallen angel.

LADY CLARINDA

What, because I have made up my mind not to give away my heart when I can sell it? I will introduce you to my new acquaintance, Mr. Mac Quedy: he will talk to you by the hour about exchangeable value, and show you that no rational being will part with anything, except to the highest bidder.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Now, I am sure you are not in earnest. You cannot adopt such sentiments in their naked deformity.

LADY CLARINDA

Naked deformity! Why Mr. Mac Quedy will prove to you that they are the cream of the most refined philosophy. You live a very pleasant life as a bachelor, roving about the country with your portfolio under your arm. I am not fit to be a poor man's wife. I cannot take any kind of trouble, or do any one thing that is of any use. Many decent families roast a bit of mutton on a string; but if I displease my father I shall not have as much as will buy the string, to say nothing of the meat; and the bare idea of such cookery gives me the horrors.

By this time, they were near the Castle, and met Miss Crotchet and her companion, who had turned back to meet

them. Captain Fitzchrome was shortly after heartily welcomed by Mr. Crotchet, and the party separated to dress for dinner, the captain being by no means in an enviable state of mind, and full of misgivings as to the extent of belief that he was bound to accord to the words of the lady of his heart.

CHAPTER IV

THE PARTY

'En quoi cognoissez-vous la folie anticque? En quoi cognoissez-vous la sagesse présente?'—RABELAIS.

'IF I were sketching a bandit who had just shot his last pursuer, having outrun all the rest, that is the very face I would give him,' soliloquised the captain, as he studied the features of his rival in the drawing-room, during the miserable half-hour before dinner, when dulness reigns predominant over the expectant company, especially when they are waiting for some one last comer, whom they all heartily curse in their hearts, and whom, nevertheless, or indeed therefore-the-more, they welcome as a sinner, more heartily than all the just persons who had been punctual to their engagement. Some new visitors had arrived in the morning, and, as the company dropped in one by one, the captain anxiously watched the unclosing door for the form of his beloved: but she was the last to make her appearance, and on her entry gave him a malicious glance, which he construed into a telegraphic communication that she had stayed away to torment him. Young Crotchet escorted her with marked attention to the upper end of the drawing-room, where a great portion of the company was congregated around Miss Crotchet. These being the only ladies in the company, it was evident that old Mr. Crotchet would give his arm to Lady Clarinda, an arrangement with which the captain could not interfere. He therefore took his station near the door, studying his rival from a distance, and determined to take advantage of his present position, to secure the seat next to his charmer. He was meditating on the best

mode of operation for securing this important post with due regard to *bienséance*, when he was twitched by the button by Mr. Mac Quedy, who said to him: 'Lady Clarinda tells me, sir, that you are anxious to talk with me on the subject of exchangeable value, from which I infer that you have studied political economy, and as a great deal depends on the definition of value, I shall be glad to set you right on that point.' 'I am much obliged to you, sir,' said the captain, and was about to express his utter disqualification for the proposed instruction, when Mr. Skionar walked up and said: 'Lady Clarinda informs me that you wish to talk over with me the question of subjective reality. I am delighted to fall in with a gentleman who duly appreciates the transcendental philosophy.' 'Lady Clarinda is too good,' said the captain; and was about to protest that he had never heard the word transcendental before, when the butler announced dinner. Mr. Crotchet led the way with Lady Clarinda: Lord Bossnowl followed with Miss Crotchet: the economist and transcendentalist pinned in the captain, and held him, one by each arm, as he impatiently descended the stairs in the rear of several others of the company, whom they had forced him to let pass; but the moment he entered the dining-room he broke loose from them, and at the expense of a little *brusquerie*, secured his position.

'Well, captain,' said Lady Clarinda, 'I perceive you can still manœuvre.'

'What could possess you,' said the captain, 'to send two unendurable and inconceivable bores, to intercept me with rubbish about which I neither know nor care any more than the man in the moon?'

'Perhaps,' said Lady Clarinda, 'I saw your design, and wished to put your generalship to the test. But do not contradict anything I have said about you, and see if the learned will find you out.'

'There is fine music, as Rabelais observes, in the *cliquetis d'assiettes*, a refreshing shade in the *ombre de salle à manger*, and an elegant fragrance in the *fumée de rôti*,' said a voice at the captain's elbow. The captain turning round, recognised his clerical friend of the morning, who knew him again immediately, and said he was extremely glad to meet him there; more especially as Lady Clarinda had assured him that he was an enthusiastic lover of Greek poetry.

'Lady Clarinda,' said the captain, 'is a very pleasant young lady.'

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

So she is, sir: and I understand she has all the wit of the family to herself, whatever that *totum* may be. But a glass of wine after soup is, as the French say, the *verre de santé*. The current of opinion sets in favour of Hock: but I am for Madeira; I do not fancy Hock till I have laid a substratum of Madeira. Will you join me?

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

With pleasure.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Here is a very fine salmon before me: and May is the very *point nommé* to have salmon in perfection. There is a fine turbot close by, and there is much to be said in his behalf: but salmon in May is the king of fish.

MR. CROTCHET

That salmon before you, Doctor, was caught in the Thames this morning.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Παπαπαῖ! Rarity of rarities! A Thames salmon caught this morning. Now, Mr. Mac Quedy, even in fish your Modern Athens must yield. *Cedite, Graii.*

MR. MAC QUEDY

Eh! sir, on its own ground, your Thames salmon has two virtues over all others; first, that it is fresh; and, second, that it is rare; for I understand you do not take half a dozen in a year.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

In some years, sir, not one. Mud, filth, gas-dregs, lock-weirs, and the march of mind, developed in the form of poaching, have ruined the fishery. But, when we do catch a salmon, happy the man to whom he falls.

MR. MAC QUEDY

I confess, sir, this is excellent: but I cannot see why it should be better than a Tweed salmon at Kelso.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, I will take a glass of Hock with you.

MR. MAC QUEDY

With all my heart, sir. There are several varieties of the salmon genus: but the common salmon, the *salmo salar*, is only one species, one and the same everywhere, just like the human mind. Locality and education make all the difference.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Education! Well, sir, I have no doubt schools for all are just as fit for the species *salmo salar* as for the genus *homo*. But you must allow that the specimen before us has finished his education in a manner that does honour to his college. However, I doubt that the *salmo salar* is only one species, that is to say, precisely alike in all localities. I hold that every river has its own breed, with essential differences; in flavour especially. And as for the human mind, I deny that it is the same in all men. I hold that there is every variety of natural capacity from the idiot to Newton and Shakspeare; the mass of mankind, midway between these extremes, being blockheads of different degrees; education leaving them pretty nearly as it found them, with this single difference, that it gives a fixed direction to their stupidity, a sort of incurable wry neck to the thing they call their understanding. So one nose points always east, and another always west, and each is ready to swear that it points due north.

MR. CROTCHET

If that be the point of truth, very few intellectual noses point due north.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Only those that point to the Modern Athens.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Where all native noses point southward.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Eh, sir, northward for wisdom, and southward for profit.

MR. CROTCHET JUN.

Champagne, Doctor?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Most willingly. But you will permit my drinking it while it sparkles. I hold it a heresy to let it deaden in my hand, while the glass of my *compotator* is being filled on the opposite side of the table. By the by, captain, you remember a passage in Athenæus, where he cites Menander on the subject of fish-sauce: ὀψάριον ἐπὶ ἰχθύος. (*The captain was aghast for an answer that would satisfy both his neighbours, when he was relieved by the divine continuing.*) The science of fish-sauce, Mr. Mac Quedy, is by no means brought to perfection; a fine field of discovery still lies open in that line.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Nay, sir, beyond lobster-sauce, I take it, ye cannot go.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

In their line, I grant you, oyster and lobster sauce are the pillars of Hercules. But I speak of the cruet sauces, where the quintessence of the sapid is condensed in a phial. I can taste in my mind's palate a combination, which, if I could give it reality, I would christen with the name of my college, and hand it down to posterity as a seat of learning indeed.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Well, sir, I wish you success, but I cannot let slip the question we started just now. I say, cutting off idiots, who have no minds at all, all minds are by nature alike. Education (which begins from their birth) makes them what they are.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No, sir, it makes their tendencies, not their power. Cæsar would have been the first wrestler on the village common. Education might have made him a Nadir Shah; it might also have made him a Washington; it could not have made him a merry-andrew, for our newspapers to extol as a model of eloquence.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Now, sir, I think education would have made him just anything, and fit for any station, from the throne to the stocks; saint or sinner, aristocrat or democrat, judge, counsel, or prisoner at the bar.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I will thank you for a slice of lamb, with lemon and pepper. Before I proceed with this discussion,—Vin de Grave, Mr. Skionar,—I must interpose one remark. There is a set of persons in your city, Mr. Mac Quedy, who concoct every three or four months, a thing which they call a review: a sort of sugar-plum manufacturers to the Whig aristocracy.

MR. MAC QUEDY

I cannot tell, sir, exactly, what you mean by that; but I hope you will speak of those gentlemen with respect, seeing that I am one of them.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, I must drown my inadvertence in a glass of Sauterne with you. There is a set of gentlemen in your city——

MR. MAC QUEDY

Not in our city, exactly; neither are they a set. There is an editor, who forages for articles in all quarters, from John o' Groat's House to the Land's End. It is not a board, or a society: it is a mere intellectual bazaar, where A, B, and C bring their wares to market.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Well, sir, these gentlemen among them, the present company excepted, have practised as much dishonesty as, in any other department than literature, would have brought the practitioner under the cognisance of the police. In politics, they have run with the hare, and hunted with the hound. In criticism, they have, knowingly and unblushingly, given false characters, both for good and for evil: sticking at no art of misrepresentation, to clear out of the field of literature all who stood in the way of the interests of their own clique. They have never allowed their own profound ignorance of anything (Greek, for instance) to throw even an air of hesitation into their oracular decision on the matter. They set an example of profligate contempt for truth, of which the success was in proportion to the effrontery; and when their prosperity had filled the market with competitors, they cried out against their own reflected sin, as if they had never committed it, or were entitled to a monopoly of it. The latter, I rather think, was what they wanted.

MR. CROTCHET

Hermitage, Doctor?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Nothing better, sir. The father who first chose the solitude of that vineyard, knew well how to cultivate his spirit in retirement. Now, Mr. Mac Quedy, Achilles was distinguished above all the Greeks for his inflexible love of truth: could education have made Achilles one of your reviewers?

MR. MAC QUEDY

No doubt of it, even if your character of them were true to the letter.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

And I say, sir—chicken and asparagus—Titan had made him of better clay.[1] I hold with Pindar: 'All that is most excellent is so by nature.' Τὸ δὲ φυᾷ κράτιστον ἅπαν.[2] Education can give purposes, but not powers; and whatever purposes had been given him, he would have gone straight forward to them; straight forward, Mr. Mac Quedy.

MR. MAC QUEDY

No, sir, education makes the man, powers, purposes, and all.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

There is the point, sir, on which we join issue.

Several others of the company now chimed in with their opinions, which gave the divine an opportunity to degustate one or two side dishes, and to take a glass of wine with each of the young ladies.

[1] Juv. xiv. 35.

[2] *Ol.* ix. 152.

CHAPTER V

CHARACTERS

'Ay imputé a honte plus que médiocre être vu spectateur ocieux de tant vaillans, disertz, et chevalereux personnaiges.'—RABELAIS.

LADY CLARINDA (*to the Captain*)

I DECLARE the creature has been listening to all this rigmarole instead of attending to me. Do you ever expect forgiveness? But now that they are all talking together, and you cannot make out a word they say, nor they hear a word that we say, I will describe the company to you. First, there is the old gentleman on my left hand, at the head of the table, who is now leaning the other way to talk to my brother. He is a good-tempered, half-informed person, very unreasonably fond of reasoning, and of reasoning people; people that talk nonsense logically: he is fond of disputation himself, when there are only one or two, but seldom does more than listen in a large company of *illuminés*. He made a great fortune in the city, and has the comfort of a good conscience. He is very hospitable and is generous in dinners; though nothing would induce him to give sixpence to the poor, because he holds that all misfortune is from imprudence, that none but the rich ought to marry, and that all ought to thrive by honest industry, as he did. He is ambitious of founding a family, and of allying himself with nobility; and is thus as willing as other grown children to throw away thousands for a gew-gaw, though he would not part with a penny for charity. Next to him is my brother, whom you know as well as I do. He has finished his education with credit, and as he never ventures to oppose me in anything, I have no doubt he is very sensible.

He has good manners, is a model of dress, and is reckoned ornamental in all societies. Next to him is Miss Crotchet, my sister-in-law that is to be. You see she is rather pretty, and very genteel. She is tolerably accomplished, has her table always covered with new novels, thinks Mr. Mac Quedy an oracle, and is extremely desirous to be called 'my lady.' Next to her is Mr. Firedamp, a very absurd person, who thinks that water is the evil principle. Next to him is Mr. Eavesdrop, a man who, by dint of a certain something like smartness, has got into good society. He is a sort of book-seller's tool, and coins all his acquaintance in reminiscences and sketches of character. I am very shy of him, for fear he should print me.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

If he print you in your own likeness, which is that of an angel, you need not fear him. If he print you in any other, I will cut his throat. But proceed.

LADY CLARINDA

Next to him is Mr. Henbane, the toxicologist, I think he calls himself. He has passed half his life in studying poisons and antidotes. The first thing he did on his arrival here, was to kill the cat; and while Miss Crotchet was crying over her, he brought her to life again. I am more shy of him than the other.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

They are two very dangerous fellows, and I shall take care to keep them both at a respectful distance. Let us hope that Eavesdrop will sketch off Henbane, and that Henbane will poison him for his trouble.

LADY CLARINDA

Well, next to him sits Mr. Mac Quedy, the Modern Athenian, who lays down the law about everything, and therefore may be taken to understand everything. He turns all the affairs of this world into questions of buying and selling. He is the Spirit of the Frozen Ocean to everything like romance

and sentiment. He condenses their volume of steam into a drop of cold water in a moment. He has satisfied me that I am a commodity in the market, and that I ought to set myself at a high price. So you see, he who would have me must bid for me.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

I shall discuss that point with Mr. Mac Quedy.

LADY CLARINDA

Not a word for your life. Our flirtation is our own secret. Let it remain so.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Flirtation, Clarinda! Is that all that the most ardent——

LADY CLARINDA

Now, don't be rhapsodical here. Next to Mr. Mac Quedy is Mr. Skionar, a sort of poetical philosopher, a curious compound of the intense and the mystical. He abominates all the ideas of Mr. Mac Quedy, and settles everything by sentiment and intuition.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Then, I say, he is the wiser man.

LADY CLARINDA

They are two oddities, but a little of them is amusing, and I like to hear them dispute. So you see I am in training for a philosopher myself.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Any philosophy, for Heaven's sake, but the pound-shilling-and-pence philosophy of Mr. Mac Quedy.

LADY CLARINDA

Why they say that even Mr. Skionar, though he is a great

dreamer, always dreams with his eyes open, or with one eye at any rate, which is an eye to his gain: but I believe that in this respect the poor man has got an ill name by keeping bad company. He has two dear friends, Mr. Wilful Wontsee and Mr. Rumblesack Shantsee, poets of some note, who used to see visions of Utopia, and pure republics beyond the Western deep: but, finding that these El Dorados brought them no revenue, they turned their vision-seeing faculty into the more profitable channel of espying all sorts of virtues in the high and the mighty, who were able and willing to pay for the discovery.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

I do not fancy these virtue-spyers.

LADY CLARINDA

Next to Mr. Skionar sits Mr. Chainmail, a good-looking young gentleman, as you see, with very antiquated tastes. He is fond of old poetry, and is something of a poet himself. He is deep in monkish literature, and holds that the best state of society was that of the twelfth century, when nothing was going forward but fighting, feasting, and praying, which he says are the three great purposes for which man was made. He laments bitterly over the inventions of gunpowder, steam, and gas, which he says have ruined the world. He lives within two or three miles, and has a large hall, adorned with rustic pikes, shields, helmets, swords, and tattered banners, and furnished with yew-tree chairs, and two long old worm-eaten oak tables, where he dines with all his household, after the fashion of his favourite age. He wants us all to dine with him, and I believe we shall go.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

That will be something new at any rate.

LADY CLARINDA

Next to him is Mr. Toogood, the co-operationist, who will have neither fighting nor praying; but wants to parcel out the world into squares like a chess-board, with a community on

each, raising everything for one another, with a great steam-engine to serve them in common for tailor and hosier, kitchen and cook.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

He is the strangest of the set, so far.

LADY CLARINDA

This brings us to the bottom of the table, where sits my humble servant, Mr. Crotchet the younger. I ought not to describe him.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

I entreat you do.

LADY CLARINDA

Well, I really have very little to say in his favour.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

I do not wish to hear anything in his favour; and I rejoice to hear you say so, because——

LADY CLARINDA

Do not flatter yourself. If I take him, it will be to please my father, and to have a town and country-house, and plenty of servants, and a carriage and an opera-box, and make some of my acquaintance who have married for love, or for rank, or for anything but money, die for envy of my jewels. You do not think I would take him for himself. Why he is very smooth and spruce, as far as his dress goes; but as to his face, he looks as if he had tumbled headlong into a volcano, and been thrown up again among the cinders.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

I cannot believe that, speaking thus of him, you mean to take him at all.

LADY CLARINDA

Oh! I am out of my teens. I have been very much in love; but now I am come to years of discretion, and must think, like other people, of settling myself advantageously. He was in love with a banker's daughter, and cast her off on her father's bankruptcy, and the poor girl has gone to hide herself in some wild place.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

She must have a strange taste, if she pines for the loss of him.

LADY CLARINDA

They say he was good-looking, till his bubble-schemes, as they call them, stamped him with the physiognomy of a desperate gambler. I suspect he has still a *penchant* towards his first flame. If he takes me, it will be for my rank and connexion, and the second seat of the borough of Rogueingrain. So we shall meet on equal terms, and shall enjoy all the blessedness of expecting nothing from each other.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

You can expect no security with such an adventurer.

LADY CLARINDA

I shall have the security of a good settlement, and then if *andare al diavolo* be his destiny, he may go, you know, by himself. He is almost always dreaming and distrait. It is very likely that some great reverse is in store for him: but that will not concern me, you perceive.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

You torture me, Clarinda, with the bare possibility.

LADY CLARINDA

Hush! Here is music to soothe your troubled spirit. Next to him, on this side, sits the dilettante composer, Mr. Trillo;

they say his name was O'Trill, and he has taken the O from the beginning, and put it at the end. I do not know how this may be. He plays well on the violoncello, and better on the piano; sings agreeably; has a talent at verse-making, and improvises a song with some felicity. He is very agreeable company in the evening, with his instruments and music-books. He maintains that the sole end of all enlightened society is to get up a good opera, and laments that wealth, genius, and energy are squandered upon other pursuits, to the neglect of this one great matter.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

That is a very pleasant fancy at any rate.

LADY CLARINDA

I assure you he has a great deal to say for it. Well, next to him again is Dr. Morbific, who has been all over the world to prove that there is no such thing as contagion; and has inoculated himself with plague, yellow fever, and every variety of pestilence, and is still alive to tell the story. I am very shy of him, too; for I look on him as a walking phial of wrath, corked full of all infections, and not to be touched without extreme hazard.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

This is the strangest fellow of all.

LADY CLARINDA

Next to him sits Mr. Philpot,[1] the geographer, who thinks of nothing but the heads and tails of rivers, and lays down the streams of Terra Incognita as accurately as if he had been there. He is a person of pleasant fancy, and makes a sort of fairyland of every country he touches, from the Frozen Ocean to the Deserts of Zahara.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

How does he settle matters with Mr. Firedamp?

[1] ΦΙΛοΠΟΤαμος. *Fluviorum amans.*

LADY CLARINDA

You see Mr. Firedamp has got as far as possible out of his way. Next to him is Sir Simon Steeltrap, of Steeltrap Lodge, Member for Crouching-Curtown, Justice of Peace for the county, and Lord of the United Manors of Springgun-and-Treadmill; a great preserver of game and public morals. By administering the laws which he assists in making, he disposes, at his pleasure, of the land and its live stock, including all the two-legged varieties, with and without feathers, in a circumference of several miles round Steeltrap Lodge. He has enclosed commons and woodlands; abolished cottage-gardens; taken the village cricket-ground into his own park, out of pure regard to the sanctity of Sunday; shut up footpaths and ale-houses (all but those which belong to his electioneering friend, Mr. Quassia, the brewer); put down fairs and fiddlers; committed many poachers; shot a few; convicted one-third of the peasantry; suspected the rest; and passed nearly the whole of them through a wholesome course of prison discipline, which has finished their education at the expense of the county.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

He is somewhat out of his element here: among such a diversity of opinions he will hear some he will not like.

LADY CLARINDA

It was rather ill-judged in Mr. Crotchet to invite him to-day. But the art of assorting company is above these *parvenus*. They invite a certain number of persons without considering how they harmonise with each other. Between Sir Simon and you is the Reverend Doctor Folliott. He is said to be an excellent scholar, and is fonder of books than the majority of his cloth; he is very fond, also, of the good things of this world. He is of an admirable temper, and says rude things in a pleasant half-earnest manner, that nobody can take offence with. And next to him again is one Captain Fitzchrome, who is very much in love with a certain person that does not mean to have anything to say to him, because she can better her fortune by taking somebody else.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

And next to him again is the beautiful, the accomplished, the witty, the fascinating, the tormenting Lady Clarinda, who traduces herself to the said captain by assertions which it would drive him crazy to believe.

LADY CLARINDA

Time will show, sir. And now we have gone the round of the table.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

But I must say, though I know you had always a turn for sketching characters, you surprise me by your observation, and especially by your attention to opinions.

LADY CLARINDA

Well, I will tell you a secret: I am writing a novel.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

A novel!

LADY CLARINDA

Yes, a novel. And I shall get a little finery by it: trinkets and fal-lals, which I cannot get from papa. You must know I had been reading several fashionable novels, the fashionable this, and the fashionable that; and I thought to myself, why I can do better than any of these myself. So I wrote a chapter or two, and sent them as a specimen to Mr. Puffall, the bookseller, telling him they were to be a part of the fashionable something or other, and he offered me, I will not say how much, to finish it in three volumes, and let him pay all the newspapers for recommending it as the work of a lady of quality, who had made very free with the characters of her acquaintance.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Surely you have not done so?

LADY CLARINDA

Oh no! I leave that to Mr. Eavesdrop. But Mr. Puffall made it a condition that I should let him say so.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

A strange recommendation.

LADY CLARINDA

Oh, nothing else will do. And it seems you may give yourself any character you like, and the newspapers will print it as if it came from themselves. I have commended you to three of our friends here, as an economist, a transcendentalist, and a classical scholar; and if you wish to be renowned through the world for these, or any other accomplishments, the newspapers will confirm you in their possession for half-a-guinea apiece.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Truly, the praise of such gentry must be a feather in any one's cap.

LADY CLARINDA

So you will see, some morning, that my novel is 'the most popular production of the day.' This is Mr. Puffall's favourite phrase. He makes the newspapers say it of everything he publishes. But 'the day,' you know, is a very convenient phrase; it allows of three hundred and sixty-five 'most popular productions' in a year. And in leap-year one more.

CHAPTER VI

THEORIES

> But when they came to shape the model,
> Not one could fit the other's noddle.'
>
> BUTLER.

MEANWHILE, the last course, and the dessert, passed by. When the ladies had withdrawn, young Crotchet addressed the company.

MR. CROTCHET JUN.

There is one point in which philosophers of all classes seem to be agreed: that they only want money to regenerate the world.

MR. MAC QUEDY

No doubt of it. Nothing is so easy as to lay down the outlines of perfect society. There wants nothing but money to set it going. I will explain myself clearly and fully by reading a paper. (*Producing a large scroll.*) 'In the infancy of society——'

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Pray, Mr. Mac Quedy, how is it that all gentlemen of your nation begin everything they write with the 'infancy of society'?

MR. MAC QUEDY

Eh, sir, it is the simplest way to begin at the beginning. 'In the infancy of society, when government was invented to save a percentage; say two and a half per cent——'

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I will not say any such thing.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Well, say any percentage you please.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I will not say any percentage at all.

MR. MAC QUEDY

'On the principle of the division of labour——'

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Government was invented to spend a percentage.

MR. MAC QUEDY

To save a percentage.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No, sir, to spend a percentage; and a good deal more than two and a half per cent. Two hundred and fifty per cent: that is intelligible.

MR. MAC QUEDY

'In the infancy of society——'

MR. TOOGOOD

Never mind the infancy of society. The question is of society in its maturity. Here is what it should be. (*Producing a paper.*) I have laid it down in a diagram.

MR. SKIONAR

Before we proceed to the question of government, we must nicely discriminate the boundaries of sense, understanding, and reason. Sense is a receptivity——

MR. CROTCHET JUN.

We are proceeding too fast. Money being all that is wanted to regenerate society, I will put into the hands of this company a large sum for the purpose. Now let us see how to dispose of it.

MR. MAC QUEDY

We will begin by taking a committee-room in London, where we will dine together once a week, to deliberate.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

If the money is to go in deliberative dinners, you may set me down for a committee man and honorary caterer.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Next, you must all learn political economy, which I will teach you, very compendiously, in lectures over the bottle.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I hate lectures over the bottle. But pray, sir, what is political economy?

MR. MAC QUEDY

Political economy is to the State what domestic economy is to the family.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No such thing, sir. In the family there is a *paterfamilias*, who regulates the distribution, and takes care that there shall be no such thing in the household as one dying of hunger, while another dies of surfeit. In the State it is all hunger at one end, and all surfeit at the other. Matchless claret, Mr. Crotchet.

MR. CROTCHET

Vintage of fifteen, Doctor.

MR. MAC QUEDY

The family consumes, and so does the State.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Consumes, sir! Yes: but the mode, the proportions: there is the essential difference between the State and the family. Sir, I hate false analogies.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Well, sir, the analogy is not essential. Distribution will come under its proper head.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Come where it will, the distribution of the State is in no respect analogous to the distribution of the family. The *paterfamilias*, sir: the *paterfamilias*.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Well, sir, let that pass. The family consumes, and in order to consume, it must have supply.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Well, sir, Adam and Eve knew that, when they delved and span.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Very true, sir. (*Reproducing his scroll.*) 'In the infancy of society——'

MR. TOOGOOD

The reverend gentleman has hit the nail on the head. It is the distribution that must be looked to: it is the *paterfamilias* that is wanting in the State. Now here I have provided him. (*Reproducing his diagram.*)

MR. TRILLO

Apply the money, sir, to building and endowing an opera house, where the ancient altar of Bacchus may flourish, and justice may be done to sublime compositions. (*Producing a part of a manuscript opera.*)

MR. SKIONAR

No, sir, build *sacella* for transcendental oracles to teach the world how to see through a glass darkly. (*Producing a scroll.*)

MR. TRILLO

See through an opera-glass brightly.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

See through a wine-glass, full of claret: then you see both darkly and brightly. But, gentlemen, if you are all in the humour for reading papers, I will read you the first half of my next Sunday's sermon. (*Producing a paper.*)

OMNES

No sermon! No sermon!

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Then I move that our respective papers be committed to our respective pockets.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Political economy is divided into two great branches, production and consumption.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Yes, sir; there are two great classes of men: those who produce much and consume little; and those who consume much and produce nothing. The *fruges consumere nati* have

the best of it. Eh, captain! You remember the characteristics of a great man according to Aristophanes: ὅστις γε πίνειν οἶδε καὶ βίνειν μόνον. Ha! ha! ha! Well, captain, even in these tight-laced days, the obscurity of a learned language allows a little pleasantry.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Very true, sir: the pleasantry and the obscurity go together: they are all one, as it were;—to me at any rate (*aside*).

MR. MAC QUEDY

Now, sir——

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Pray, sir, let your science alone, or you will put me under the painful necessity of demolishing it bit by bit, as I have done your exordium. I will undertake it any morning; but it is too hard exercise after dinner.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Well, sir, in the meantime I hold my science established.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

And I hold it demolished.

MR. CROTCHET JUN.

Pray, gentlemen, pocket your manuscripts; fill your glasses; and consider what we shall do with our money.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Build lecture-rooms, and schools for all.

MR. TRILLO

Revive the Athenian theatre; regenerate the lyrical drama.

MR. TOOGOOD

Build a grand co-operative parallelogram, with a steam-engine in the middle for a maid-of-all-work.

MR. FIREDAMP

Drain the country, and get rid of *malaria*, by abolishing duck-ponds.

DR. MORBIFIC

Found a philanthropic college of anti-contagionists, where all the members shall be inoculated with the virus of all known diseases. Try the experiment on a grand scale.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Build a great dining-hall: endow it with beef and ale, and hang the hall round with arms to defend the provisions.

MR. HENBANE

Found a toxicological institution for trying all poisons and antidotes. I myself have killed a frog twelve times and brought him to life eleven; but the twelfth time he died. I have a phial of the drug which killed him in my pocket, and shall not rest till I have discovered its antidote.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I move that the last speaker be dispossessed of his phial, and that it be forthwith thrown into the Thames.

MR. HENBANE

How, sir? my invaluable, and, in the present state of human knowledge, infallible poison?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Let the frogs have all the advantage of it.

MR. CROTCHET

Consider, Doctor, the fish might participate. Think of the salmon.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Then let the owner's right-hand neighbour swallow it.

MR. EAVESDROP

Me, sir! What have I done, sir, that I am to be poisoned, sir?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, you have published a character of your facetious friend, the Reverend Doctor F., wherein you have sketched off me—me, sir, even to my nose and wig. What business have the public with my nose and wig?

MR. EAVESDROP

Sir, it is all good-humoured: all in *bonhommie:* all friendly and complimentary.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, the bottle, *la Dive Bouteille*, is a recondite oracle, which makes an Eleusinian temple of the circle in which it moves. He who reveals its mysteries must die. Therefore, let the dose be administered. *Fiat experimentum in animâ vili.*

MR. EAVESDROP

Sir, you are very facetious at my expense.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, you have been very unfacetious, very inficete at mine. You have dished me up, like a savoury omelette, to gratify the appetite of the reading rabble for gossip. The next time, sir, I will respond with the *argumentum baculinum.* Print that,

sir: put it on record as a promise of the Reverend Dr. F., which shall be most faithfully kept, with an exemplary bamboo.

MR. EAVESDROP

Your cloth protects you, sir.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

My bamboo shall protect me, sir.

MR. CROTCHET

Doctor, Doctor, you are growing too polemical.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, my blood boils. What business have the public with my nose and wig?

MR. CROTCHET

Doctor! Doctor!

MR. CROTCHET JUN.

Pray, gentlemen, return to the point. How shall we employ our fund?

MR. PHILPOT

Surely in no way so beneficially as in exploring rivers. Send a fleet of steamboats down the Niger, and another up the Nile. So shall you civilise Africa, and establish stocking factories in Abyssinia and Bambo.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

With all submission, breeches and petticoats must precede stockings. Send out a crew of tailors. Try if the King of Bambo will invest inexpressibles.

MR. CROTCHET JUN.

Gentlemen, it is not for partial, but for general benefit, that this fund is proposed: a grand and universally applicable scheme for the amelioration of the condition of man.

SEVERAL VOICES

That is my scheme. I have not heard a scheme but my own that has a grain of common sense.

MR. TRILLO

Gentlemen, you inspire me. Your last exclamation runs itself into a chorus, and sets itself to music. Allow me to lead, and to hope for your voices in harmony.

After careful meditation,
And profound deliberation,
On the various pretty projects which have just been shown,
Not a scheme in agitation,
For the world's amelioration,
Has a grain of common sense in it, except my own.

SEVERAL VOICES

We are not disposed to join in any such chorus.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Well, of all these schemes, I am for Mr. Trillo's. Regenerate the Athenian theatre. My classical friend here, the captain, will vote with me.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

I, sir? oh! of course, sir.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Surely, captain, I rely on you to uphold political economy.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Me, sir! oh, to be sure, sir.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Pray, sir, will political economy uphold the Athenian theatre?

MR. MAC QUEDY

Surely not. It would be a very unproductive investment.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Then the captain votes against you. What, sir, did not the Athenians, the wisest of nations, appropriate to their theatre their most sacred and intangible fund? Did not they give to melopœia, choregraphy, and the sundry forms of didascalics, the precedence of all other matters, civil and military? Was it not their law, that even the proposal to divert this fund to any other purpose should be punished with death? But, sir, I further propose that the Athenian theatre being resuscitated, the admission shall be free to all who can expound the Greek choruses, constructively, mythologically, and metrically, and to none others. So shall all the world learn Greek: Greek, the Alpha and Omega of all knowledge. At him who sits not in the theatre, shall be pointed the finger of scorn: he shall be called in the highway of the city, 'a fellow without Greek.'

MR. TRILLO

But the ladies, sir, the ladies.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Every man may take in a lady: and she who can construe and metricise a chorus, shall, if she so please, pass in by herself.

MR. TRILLO

But, sir, you will shut me out of my own theatre. Let there at least be a double passport, Greek and Italian.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No, sir; I am inexorable. No Greek, no theatre.

MR. TRILLO

Sir, I cannot consent to be shut out from my own theatre.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

You see how it is, Squire Crotchet the younger; you can scarcely find two to agree on a scheme, and no two of those can agree on the details. Keep your money in your pocket. And so ends the fund for regenerating the world.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Nay, by no means. We are all agreed on deliberative dinners.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Very true; we will dine and discuss. We will sing with Robin Hood, 'If I drink water while this doth last'; and while it lasts we will have no adjournment, if not to the Athenian theatre.

MR. TRILLO

Well, gentlemen, I hope this chorus at least will please you:

If I drink water while this doth last,
  May I never again drink wine:
For how can a man, in his life of a span,
  Do anything better than dine?
We'll dine and drink, and say if we think
  That anything better can be,
And when we have dined, wish all mankind
  May dine as well as we.
And though a good wish will fill no dish
  And brim no cup with sack,
Yet thoughts will spring, as the glasses ring,
  To illumine our studious track.

On the brilliant dreams of our hopeful schemes
The light of the flask shall shine ;
And we'll sit till day, but we'll find the way
To drench the world with wine.

The schemes for the world's regeneration evaporated in a tumult of voices.

CHAPTER VII

THE SLEEPING VENUS

'Quoth he: In all my life till now,
I ne'er saw so profane a show.'
BUTLER.

THE library of Crotchet Castle was a large and well-furnished apartment, opening on one side into an ante-room, on the other into a music-room. It had several tables stationed at convenient distances; one consecrated to the novelties of literature, another to the novelties of embellishment; others unoccupied, and at the disposal of the company. The walls were covered with a copious collection of ancient and modern books; the ancient having been selected and arranged by the Reverend Doctor Folliott. In the ante-room were card tables; in the music-room were various instruments, all popular operas, and all fashionable music. In this suite of apartments, and not in the drawing-room, were the evenings of Crotchet Castle usually passed.

The young ladies were in the music-room; Miss Crotchet at the piano, Lady Clarinda at the harp, playing and occasionally singing, at the suggestion of Mr. Trillo, portions of *Matilde di Shabran*. Lord Bossnowl was turning over the leaves for Miss Crotchet; the captain was performing the same office for Lady Clarinda, but with so much more attention to the lady than the book, that he often made sad work with the harmony, by turning over two leaves together. On these occasions Miss Crotchet paused, Lady Clarinda laughed, Mr. Trillo scolded, Lord Bossnowl yawned, the captain apologised, and the performance proceeded.

In the library, Mr. Mac Quedy was expounding political

economy to the Reverend Doctor Folliott, who was *pro more* demolishing its doctrines *seriatim*.

Mr. Chainmail was in hot dispute with Mr. Skionar touching the physical and moral well-being of man. Mr. Skionar was enforcing his friend Mr. Shantsee's views of moral discipline; maintaining that the sole thing needful for man in this world was loyal and pious education; the giving men good books to read, and enough of the hornbook to read them; with a judicious interspersion of the lessons of Old Restraint, which was his poetic name for the parish stocks. Mr. Chainmail, on the other hand, stood up for the exclusive necessity of beef and ale, lodging and raiment, wife and children, courage to fight for them all, and armour wherewith to do so.

Mr. Henbane had got his face scratched, and his finger bitten, by the cat, in trying to catch her for a second experiment in killing and bringing to life; and Doctor Morbific was comforting him with a disquisition to prove that there were only four animals having the power to communicate hydrophobia, of which the cat was one; and that it was not necessary that the animal should be in a rabid state, the nature of the wound being everything, and the idea of contagion a delusion. Mr. Henbane was listening very lugubriously to this dissertation.

Mr. Philpot had seized on Mr. Firedamp, and pinned him down to a map of Africa, on which he was tracing imaginary courses of mighty inland rivers, terminating in lakes and marshes, where they were finally evaporated by the heat of the sun; and Mr. Firedamp's hair was standing on end at the bare imagination of the mass of *malaria* that must be engendered by the operation. Mr. Toogood had begun explaining his diagrams to Sir Simon Steeltrap; but Sir Simon grew testy, and told Mr. Toogood that the promulgators of such doctrines ought to be consigned to the treadmill. The philanthropist walked off from the country gentleman, and proceeded to hold forth to young Crotchet, who stood silent, as one who listens, but in reality without hearing a syllable. Mr. Crotchet senior, as the master of the house, was left to entertain himself with his own meditations, till the Reverend Doctor Folliott tore himself from Mr. Mac Quedy, and proceeded to expostulate with Mr. Crotchet on a delicate topic.

There was an Italian painter, who obtained the name of *Il*

Bragatore, by the superinduction of inexpressibles on the naked Apollos and Bacchuses of his betters. The fame of this worthy remained one and indivisible, till a set of heads, which had been, by a too common mistake of nature's journeymen, stuck upon magisterial shoulders, as the Corinthian capitals of 'fair round bellies with fat capon lined,' but which nature herself had intended for the noddles of porcelain mandarins, promulgated simultaneously from the east and the west of London an order that no plaster-of-Paris Venus should appear in the streets without petticoats. Mr. Crotchet, on reading this order in the evening paper, which, by the postman's early arrival, was always laid on his breakfast-table, determined to fill his house with Venuses of all sizes and kinds. In pursuance of this resolution came packages by water-carriage, containing an infinite variety of Venuses. There were the Medicean Venus, and the Bathing Venus; the Uranian Venus, and the Pandemian Venus; the Crouching Venus, and the Sleeping Venus; the Venus rising from the sea, the Venus with the apple of Paris, and the Venus with the armour of Mars.

The Reverend Doctor Folliott had been very much astonished at this unexpected display. Disposed, as he was, to hold that whatever had been in Greece was right, he was more than doubtful of the propriety of throwing open the classical *adytum* to the illiterate profane. Whether, in his interior mind, he was at all influenced, either by the consideration that it would be for the credit of his cloth, with some of his vice-suppressing neighbours, to be able to say that he had expostulated; or by curiosity, to try what sort of defence his city-bred friend, who knew the classics only by translations, and whose reason was always a little ahead of his knowledge, would make for his somewhat ostentatious display of liberality in matters of taste; is a question on which the learned may differ: but, after having duly deliberated on two full-sized casts of the Uranian and Pandemian Venus, in niches on each side of the chimney, and on three alabaster figures, in glass cases, on the mantelpiece, he proceeded, peirastically, to open his fire.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

These little alabaster figures on the mantelpiece, Mr.

Crotchet, and those large figures in the niches,—may I take the liberty to ask you what they are intended to represent?

MR. CROTCHET

Venus, sir; nothing more, sir; just Venus.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

May I ask you, sir, why they are there?

MR. CROTCHET

To be looked at, sir; just to be looked at: the reasons for most things in a gentleman's house being in it at all; from the paper on the walls, and the drapery of the curtains, even to the books in the library, of which the most essential part is the appearance of the back.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Very true, sir. As great philosophers hold that the *esse* of things is *percipi*, so a gentleman's furniture exists to be looked at. Nevertheless, sir, there are some things more fit to be looked at than others; for instance, there is nothing more fit to be looked at than the outside of a book. It is, as I may say, from repeated experience, a pure and unmixed pleasure to have a goodly volume lying before you, and to know that you may open it if you please, and need not open it unless you please. It is a resource against *ennui*, if *ennui* should come upon you. To have the resource and not to feel the *ennui*, to enjoy your bottle in the present, and your book in the indefinite future, is a delightful condition of human existence. There is no place, in which a man can move or sit, in which the outside of a book can be otherwise than an innocent and becoming spectacle. Touching this matter, there cannot, I think, be two opinions. But with respect to your Venuses there can be, and indeed there are, two very distinct opinions. Now, sir, that little figure in the centre of the mantelpiece,—as a grave *paterfamilias*, Mr. Crotchet, with a fair nubile daughter, whose eyes are like the fish-pools of Heshbon,—I would ask you if you hold that figure to be altogether delicate?

MR. CROTCHET

The Sleeping Venus, sir? Nothing can be more delicate than the entire contour of the figure, the flow of the hair on the shoulders and neck, the form of the feet and fingers. It is altogether a most delicate morsel.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Why, in that sense, perhaps, it is as delicate as whitebait in July. But the attitude, sir, the attitude.

MR. CROTCHET

Nothing can be more natural, sir.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

That is the very thing, sir. It is too natural: too natural, sir: it lies for all the world like —— I make no doubt, the pious cheesemonger, who recently broke its plaster facsimile over the head of the itinerant vendor, was struck by a certain similitude to the position of his own sleeping beauty, and felt his noble wrath thereby justly aroused.

MR. CROTCHET

Very likely, sir. In my opinion, the cheesemonger was a fool, and the justice who sided with him was a greater.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Fool, sir, is a harsh term: call not thy brother a fool.

MR. CROTCHET

Sir, neither the cheesemonger nor the justice is a brother of mine.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, we are all brethren.

MR. CROTCHET

Yes, sir, as the hangman is of the thief; the squire of the poacher; the judge of the libeller; the lawyer of his client; the statesman of his colleague; the bubble-blower of the bubble-buyer; the slave-driver of the negro; as these are brethren, so am I and the worthies in question.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

To be sure, sir, in these instances, and in many others, the term brother must be taken in its utmost latitude of interpretation: we are all brothers, nevertheless. But to return to the point. Now these two large figures, one with drapery on the lower half of the body, and the other with no drapery at all; upon my word, sir, it matters not what godfathers and godmothers may have promised and vowed for the children of this world, touching the devil and other things to be renounced, if such figures as those are to be put before their eyes.

MR. CROTCHET

Sir, the naked figure is the Pandemian Venus, and the half-draped figure is the Uranian Venus; and I say, sir, that figure realises the finest imaginings of Plato, and is the personification of the most refined and exalted feeling of which the human mind is susceptible; the love of pure, ideal, intellectual beauty.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I am aware, sir, that Plato, in his *Symposium*, discourseth very eloquently touching the Uranian and Pandemian Venus: but you must remember that, in our Universities, Plato is held to be little better than a misleader of youth; and they have shown their contempt for him, not only by never reading him (a mode of contempt in which they deal very largely), but even by never printing a complete edition of him; although they have printed many ancient books, which nobody suspects to have been ever read on the spot, except by a person attached to the press, who is therefore emphatically called 'the reader.'

MR. CROTCHET

Well, sir?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Why, sir, to 'the reader' aforesaid (supposing either of our Universities to have printed an edition of Plato), or to any one else who can be supposed to have read Plato, or indeed to be ever likely to do so, I would very willingly show these figures; because to such they would, I grant you, be the outward and visible signs of poetical and philosophical ideas: but, to the multitude, the gross carnal multitude, they are but two beautiful women, one half undressed, and the other quite so.

MR. CROTCHET

Then, sir, let the multitude look upon them and learn modesty.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I must say that, if I wished my footman to learn modesty, I should not dream of sending him to school to a naked Venus.

MR. CROTCHET

Sir, ancient sculpture is the true school of modesty. But where the Greeks had modesty, we have cant; where they had poetry, we have cant; where they had patriotism, we have cant; where they had anything that exalts, delights, or adorns humanity, we have nothing but cant, cant, cant. And, sir, to show my contempt for cant in all its shapes, I have adorned my house with the Greek Venus, in all her shapes, and am ready to fight her battle, against all the societies that ever were instituted for the suppression of truth and beauty.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

My dear sir, I am afraid you are growing warm. Pray be cool. Nothing contributes so much to good digestion as to be perfectly cool after dinner.

MR. CROTCHET

Sir, the Lacedæmonian virgins wrestled naked with young men ; and they grew up, as the wise Lycurgus had foreseen, into the most modest of women, and the most exemplary of wives and mothers.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Very likely, sir ; but the Athenian virgins did no such thing, and they grew up into wives who stayed at home,—stayed at home, sir ; and looked after their husbands' dinner,—his dinner, sir, you will please to observe.

MR. CROTCHET

And what was the consequence of that, sir ? that they were such very insipid persons that the husband would not go home to eat his dinner, but preferred the company of some Aspasia, or Lais.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Two very different persons, sir, give me leave to remark.

MR. CROTCHET

Very likely, sir ; but both too good to be married in Athens.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, Lais was a Corinthian.

MR. CROTCHET

Od's vengeance, sir, some Aspasia and any other Athenian name of the same sort of person you like

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I do not like the sort of person at all : the sort of person I like, as I have already implied, is a modest woman, who stays at home and looks after her husband's dinner.

MR. CROTCHET

Well, sir, that was not the taste of the Athenians. They preferred the society of women who would not have made any scruple about sitting as models to Praxiteles; as you know, sir, very modest women in Italy did to Canova: one of whom, an Italian countess, being asked by an English lady, 'How she could bear it?' answered, 'Very well; there was a good fire in the room.'

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, the English lady should have asked how the Italian lady's husband could bear it. The phials of my wrath would overflow if poor dear Mrs. Folliott——: sir, in return for your story, I will tell you a story of my ancestor, Gilbert Folliott. The devil haunted him, as he did Saint Francis, in the likeness of a beautiful damsel; but all he could get from the exemplary Gilbert was an admonition to wear a stomacher and longer petticoats.

MR. CROTCHET

Sir, your story makes for my side of the question. It proves that the devil, in the likeness of a fair damsel, with short petticoats and no stomacher, was almost too much for Gilbert Folliott. The force of the spell was in the drapery.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Bless my soul, sir!

MR. CROTCHET

Give me leave, sir. Diderot—

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Who was he, sir?

MR. CROTCHET

Who was he, sir? the sublime philosopher, the father of

the encyclopædia, of all the encyclopædias that have ever been printed.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Bless me, sir, a terrible progeny: they belong to the tribe of *Incubi*.

MR. CROTCHET

The great philosopher, Diderot——

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, Diderot is not a man after my heart. Keep to the Greeks, if you please; albeit this Sleeping Venus is not an antique.

MR. CROTCHET

Well, sir, the Greeks: why do we call the Elgin marbles inestimable? Simply because they are true to nature. And why are they so superior in that point to all modern works, with all our greater knowledge of anatomy? Why, sir, but because the Greeks, having no cant, had better opportunities of studying models?

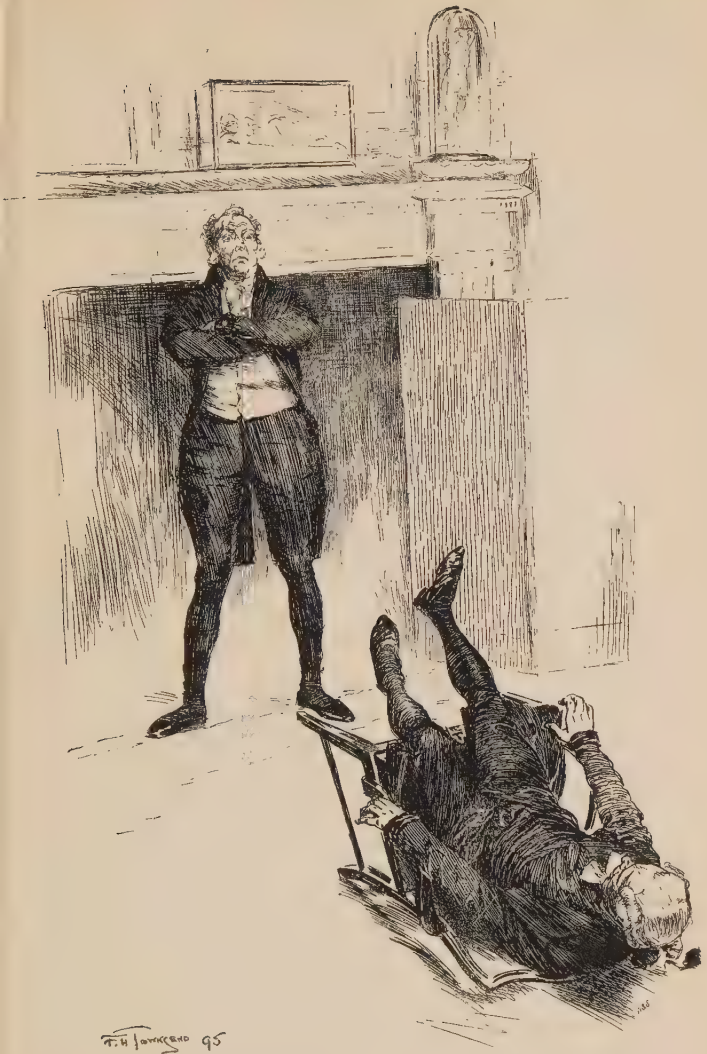
THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, I deny our greater knowledge of anatomy. But I shall take the liberty to employ, on this occasion, the *argumentum ad hominem*. Would you have allowed Miss Crotchet to sit for a model to Canova?

MR. CROTCHET

Yes, sir.

'God bless my soul, sir!' exclaimed the Reverend Doctor Folliott, throwing himself back into a chair, and flinging up his heels, with the premeditated design of giving emphasis to his exclamation: but by miscalculating his *impetus*, he overbalanced his chair, and laid himself on the carpet in a right angle, of which his back was the base.



"'God bless my soul, sir!'"

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CHAPTER VIII

SCIENCE AND CHARITY

'Chi sta nel mondo un par d'ore contento,
Nè gli vien tolta, ovver contaminata,
Quella sua pace in veruno momento,
Può dir che Giove drittamente il guata.'

FORTEGUERRI.

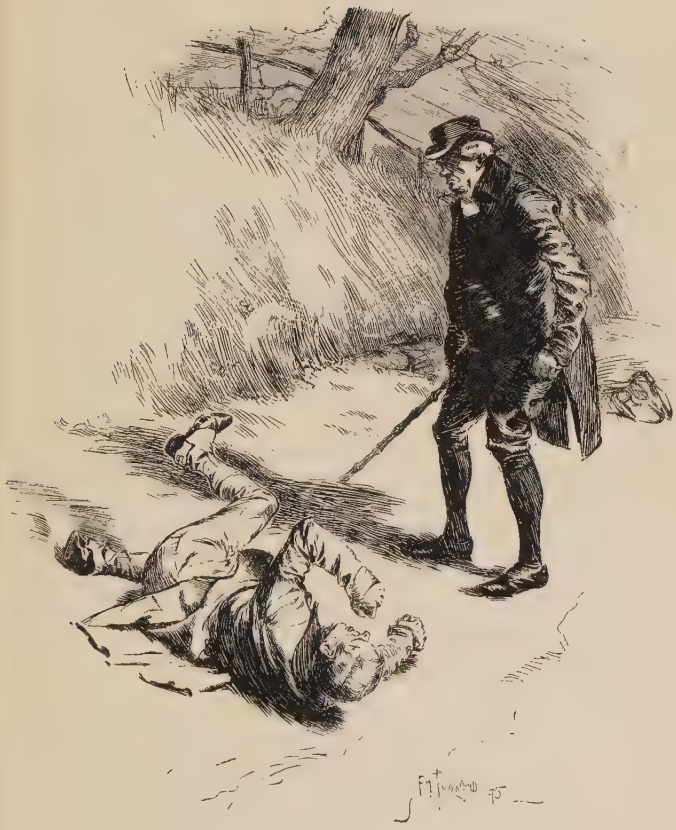
THE Reverend Doctor Folliott took his departure about ten o'clock, to walk home to his vicarage. There was no moon, but the night was bright and clear, and afforded him as much light as he needed. He paused a moment by the Roman camp, to listen to the nightingale; repeated to himself a passage of Sophocles; proceeded through the park gate, and entered the narrow lane that led to the village. He walked on in a very pleasant mood of the state called *reverie;* in which fish and wine, Greek and political economy, the Sleeping Venus he had left behind, and poor dear Mrs. Folliott, to whose fond arms he was returning, passed as in a *camera obscura*, over the tablets of his imagination. Presently the image of Mr. Eavesdrop, with a printed sketch of the Reverend Doctor F., presented itself before him, and he began mechanically to flourish his bamboo. The movement was prompted by his good genius, for the uplifted bamboo received the blow of a ponderous cudgel, which was intended for his head. The reverend gentleman recoiled two or three paces, and saw before him a couple of ruffians, who were preparing to renew the attack, but whom, with two swings of his bamboo, he laid with cracked sconces on the earth, where he proceeded to deal with them like corn beneath the flail of the thresher. One of them drew a

pistol, which went off in the very act of being struck aside by the bamboo, and lodged a bullet in the brain of the other. There was then only one enemy, who vainly struggled to rise, every effort being attended with a new and more signal prostration. The fellow roared for mercy. 'Mercy, rascal!' cried the divine; 'what mercy were you going to show me, villain? What! I warrant me, you thought it would be an easy matter, and no sin, to rob and murder a parson on his way home from dinner. You said to yourself, doubtless, "We'll waylay the fat parson (you irreverent knave) as he waddles home (you disparaging ruffian) half-seas-over" (you calumnious vagabond).' And with every dyslogistic term, which he supposed had been applied to himself, he inflicted a new bruise on his rolling and roaring antagonist. 'Ah, rogue!' he proceeded, 'you can roar now, marauder; you were silent enough when you devoted my brains to dispersion under your cudgel. But seeing that I cannot bind you, and that I intend you not to escape, and that it would be dangerous to let you rise, I will disable you in all your members, I will contund you as Thestylis did strong-smelling herbs,[1] in the quality whereof you do most gravely partake, as my nose beareth testimony, ill weed that you are. I will beat you to a jelly, and I will then roll you into the ditch, to lie till the constable comes for you, thief.'

'Hold! hold! reverend sir,' exclaimed the penitent culprit, 'I am disabled already in every finger, and in every joint. I will roll myself into the ditch, reverend sir.'

'Stir not, rascal,' returned the divine, 'stir not so much as the quietest leaf above you, or my bamboo rebounds on your body, like hail in a thunder-storm. Confess, speedily, villain; are you simple thief, or would you have manufactured me into a subject, for the benefit of science? Ay, miscreant caitiff, you would have made me a subject for science, would you? You are a schoolmaster abroad, are you? You are marching with a detachment of the march of mind, are you? You are a member of the Steam Intellect Society, are you? You swear by the learned friend, do you?'

[1] 'Thestylis . . .
. . . herbas contundit olentes.
VIRG. *Ecl.* ii. 10, 11.



"*"Mercy, rascal! what mercy were you going to show me?"*"

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'Oh no, reverend sir,' answered the criminal, 'I am innocent of all these offences, whatever they are, reverend sir. The only friend I had in the world is lying dead beside me, reverend sir.'

The reverend gentleman paused a moment, and leaned on his bamboo. The culprit, bruised as he was, sprang on his legs, and went off in double quick time. The Doctor gave him chase, and had nearly brought him within arm's length, when the fellow turned at right angles, and sprang clean over a deep dry ditch. The divine, following with equal ardour, and less dexterity, went down over head and ears into a thicket of nettles. Emerging with much discomposure, he proceeded to the village, and roused the constable; but the constable found, on reaching the scene of action, that the dead man was gone, as well as his living accomplice.

'Oh, the monster!' exclaimed the Reverend Doctor Folliott, 'he has made a subject for science of the only friend he had in the world.' 'Ay, my dear,' he resumed, the next morning at breakfast, 'if my old reading, and my early gymnastics (for as the great Hermann says, before I was demulced by the Muses, I was *ferocis ingenii puer, et ad arma quam ad literas paratior*[1]), had not imbued me indelibly with some of the holy rage of *Frère Jean des Entommeures*, I should be, at this moment, lying on the table of some flinty-hearted anatomist, who would have sliced and disjointed me as unscrupulously as I do these remnants of the capon and chine, wherewith you consoled yourself yesterday for my absence at dinner. Phew! I have a noble thirst upon me, which I will quench with floods of tea.'

The reverend gentleman was interrupted by a messenger, who informed him that the Charity Commissioners requested his presence at the inn, where they were holding a sitting.

'The Charity Commissioners!' exclaimed the reverend gentleman, 'who on earth are they?'

The messenger could not inform him, and the reverend gentleman took his hat and stick, and proceeded to the inn.

On entering the best parlour, he saw three well-dressed and bulky gentlemen sitting at a table, and a fourth officiating as clerk, with an open book before him, and a pen in his hand.

[1] 'A boy of fierce disposition, more inclined to arms than to letters.' Hermann's *Dedication of Homer's Hymns to his Preceptor Ilgen.*

The churchwardens, who had been also summoned, were already in attendance.

The chief commissioner politely requested the Reverend Doctor Folliott to be seated, and after the usual meteorological preliminaries had been settled by a resolution, *nem. con.*, that it was a fine day but very hot, the chief commissioner stated, that in virtue of the commission of Parliament, which they had the honour to hold, they were now to inquire into the state of the public charities of this village.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

The state of the public charities, sir, is exceedingly simple. There are none. The charities here are all private, and so private, that I for one know nothing of them.

FIRST COMMISSIONER

We have been informed, sir, that there is an annual rent charged on the land of Hautbois, for the endowment and repair of an almshouse.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Hautbois! Hautbois!

FIRST COMMISSIONER

The manorial farm of Hautbois, now occupied by Farmer Seedling, is charged with the endowment and maintenance of an almshouse.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

(*to the Churchwarden*)

How is this, Mr. Bluenose?

FIRST CHURCHWARDEN

I really do not know, sir. What say you, Mr. Appletwig?

MR. APPLETWIG

(*parish-clerk and schoolmaster; an old man*)

I do remember, gentlemen, to have been informed, that there did stand, at the end of the village, a ruined cottage,

The divine went down over head and ears into a thicket of nettles.'

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which had once been an almshouse, which was endowed and maintained, by an annual revenue of a mark and a half, or one pound sterling, charged some centuries ago on the farm of Hautbois; but the means, by the progress of time, having become inadequate to the end, the almshouse tumbled to pieces.

FIRST COMMISSIONER

But this is a right which cannot be abrogated by desuetude, and the sum of one pound per annum is still chargeable for charitable purposes on the manorial farm of Hautbois.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Very well, sir.

MR. APPLETWIG

But, sir, the one pound per annum is still received by the parish, but was long ago, by an unanimous vote in open vestry, given to the minister.

THE THREE COMMISSIONERS

(*unâ voce*)

The minister!

FIRST COMMISSIONER

This is an unjustifiable proceeding.

SECOND COMMISSIONER

A misappropriation of a public fund.

THIRD COMMISSIONER

A flagrant perversion of a charitable donation.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

God bless my soul, gentlemen! I know nothing of this matter. How is this, Mr. Bluenose? Do I receive this one pound per annum?

FIRST CHURCHWARDEN

Really, sir, I know no more about it than you do.

MR. APPLETWIG

You certainly receive it, sir. It was voted to one of your predecessors. Farmer Seedling lumps it in with his tithes.

FIRST COMMISSIONER

Lumps it in, sir! Lump in a charitable donation!

SECOND AND THIRD COMMISSIONERS

Oh-oh-oh-h-h!

FIRST COMMISSIONER

Reverend sir, and gentlemen, officers of this parish, we are under the necessity of admonishing you that this is a most improper proceeding; and you are hereby duly admonished accordingly. Make a record, Mr. Milky.

MR. MILKY (*writing*)

The clergyman and churchwardens of the village of Hm-m-m-m- gravely admonished. Hm-m-m-m.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Is that all, gentlemen?

THE COMMISSIONERS

That is all, sir; and we wish you a good morning.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

A very good morning to you, gentlemen.

'What in the name of all that is wonderful, Mr. Bluenose,' said the Reverend Doctor Folliott, as he walked out of the inn,

'what in the name of all that is wonderful, can those fellows mean? They have come here in a chaise and four, to make a fuss about a pound per annum, which, after all, they leave as it was: I wonder who pays them for their trouble, and how much.'

MR. APPLETWIG

The public pay for it, sir. It is a job of the learned friend whom you admire so much. It makes away with public money in salaries, and private money in lawsuits, and does no particle of good to any living soul.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Ay, ay, Mr. Appletwig; that is just the sort of public service to be looked for from the learned friend. Oh, the learned friend! the learned friend! He is the evil genius of everything that falls in his way.

The Reverend Doctor walked off to Crotchet Castle, to narrate his misadventures, and exhale his budget of grievances on Mr. Mac Quedy, whom he considered a ringleader of the march of mind.

CHAPTER IX

THE VOYAGE

Οἱ μὲν ἔπειτ' ἀναβάντες ἐπέπλεον ὑγρὰ κέλευθα.

'Mounting the bark, they cleft the watery ways.'
HOMER.

FOUR beautiful cabined pinnaces, one for the ladies, one for the gentlemen, one for kitchen and servants, one for a dining-room and band of music, weighed anchor, on a fine July morning, from below Crotchet Castle, and were towed merrily, by strong trotting horses, against the stream of the Thames. They passed from the district of chalk, successively into the districts of clay, of sand-rock, of oolite, and so forth. Sometimes they dined in their floating dining-room, sometimes in tents, which they pitched on the dry smooth-shaven green of a newly-mown meadow; sometimes they left their vessels to see sights in the vicinity; sometimes they passed a day or two in a comfortable inn.

At Oxford, they walked about to see the curiosities of architecture, painted windows, and undisturbed libraries. The Reverend Doctor Folliott laid a wager with Mr. Crotchet 'that in all their perlustrations they would not find a man reading,' and won it. 'Ay, sir,' said the reverend gentleman, 'this is still a seat of learning, on the principle of—once a captain, always a captain. We may well ask, in these great reservoirs of books whereof no man ever draws a sluice, *Quorsum pertinuit stipere Platona Menandro?*[1] What is done here for the classics? Reprinting German editions on better paper. A

[1] 'Wherefore is Plato on Menander piled?'
HOR. *Sat.* ii. 3, 11.

'And were towed merrily, by strong trotting horses.'

great boast, verily! What for mathematics? What for metaphysics? What for history? What for anything worth knowing? This was a seat of learning in the days of Friar Bacon. But the Friar is gone, and his learning with him. Nothing of him is left but the immortal nose, which, when his brazen head had tumbled to pieces, crying 'Time's Past,' was the only palpable fragment among its minutely pulverised atoms, and which is still resplendent over the portals of its cognominal college. That nose, sir, is the only thing to which I shall take off my hat, in all this Babylon of buried literature.

MR. CROTCHET

But, Doctor, it is something to have a great reservoir of learning, at which some may draw if they please.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

But, here, good care is taken that nobody shall please. If even a small drop from the sacred fountain, πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβάς, as Callimachus has it, were carried off by any one, it would be evidence of something to hope for. But the system of dissuasion from all good learning is brought here to a pitch of perfection that baffles the keenest aspirant. I run over to myself the names of the scholars of Germany, a glorious catalogue: but ask for those of Oxford,—Where are they? The echoes of their courts, as vacant as their heads, will answer, Where are they? The tree shall be known by its fruit: and seeing that this great tree, with all its specious seeming, brings forth no fruit, I do denounce it as a barren fig.

MR. MAC QUEDY

I shall set you right on this point. We do nothing without motives. If learning get nothing but honour, and very little of that; and if the good things of this world, which ought to be the rewards of learning, become the mere gifts of self-interested patronage, you must not wonder if, in the finishing of education, the science which takes precedence of all others should be the science of currying favour.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Very true, sir. Education is well finished, for all worldly purposes, when the head is brought into the state whereinto I am accustomed to bring a marrow-bone, when it has been set before me on a toast, with a white napkin wrapped round it. Nothing trundles along the highroad of preferment so trimly as a well-biassed sconce, picked clean within and polished without; *totus teres atque rotundus*.[1] The perfection of the finishing lies in the bias, which keeps it trundling in the given direction. There is good and sufficient reason for the fig being barren, but it is not therefore the less a barren fig.

At Godstow, they gathered hazel on the grave of Rosamond; and, proceeding on their voyage, fell into a discussion on legendary histories.

LADY CLARINDA

History is but a tiresome thing in itself: it becomes more agreeable the more romance is mixed up with it. The great enchanter has made me learn many things which I should never have dreamed of studying, if they had not come to me in the form of amusement.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

What enchanter is that? There are two enchanters: he of the north, and he of the south.

MR. TRILLO

Rossini?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Ay, there is another enchanter. But I mean the great enchanter of Covent Garden: he who, for more than a quarter of a century, has produced two pantomimes a year, to the delight of children of all ages; including myself at all ages. That is the enchanter for me. I am for the pantomimes. All the northern enchanter's romances put together would not furnish materials for half the southern enchanter's pantomimes.

[1] All smooth and round.

LADY CLARINDA

Surely you do not class literature with pantomime?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

In these cases, I do. They are both one, with a slight difference. The one is the literature of pantomime, the other is the pantomime of literature. There is the same variety of character, the same diversity of story, the same copiousness of incident, the same research into costume, the same display of heraldry, falconry, minstrelsy, scenery, monkery, witchery, devilry, robbery, poachery, piracy, fishery, gipsy-astrology, demonology, architecture, fortification, castrametation, navigation; the same running base of love and battle. The main difference is, that the one set of amusing fictions is told in music and action; the other in all the worst dialects of the English language. As to any sentence worth remembering, any moral or political truth, anything having a tendency, however remote, to make men wiser or better, to make them think, to make them ever think of thinking; they are both precisely alike: *nuspiam*, *nequaquam*, *nullibi*, *nullimodis*.

LADY CLARINDA

Very amusing, however.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Very amusing, very amusing.

MR. CHAINMAIL

My quarrel with the northern enchanter is, that he has grossly misrepresented the twelfth century.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

He has misrepresented everything, or he would not have been very amusing. Sober truth is but dull matter to the reading rabble. The angler, who puts not on his hook the

bait that best pleases the fish, may sit all day on the bank without catching a gudgeon.[1]

MR. MAC QUEDY

But how do you mean that he has misrepresented the twelfth century? By exhibiting some of its knights and ladies in the colours of refinement and virtue, seeing that they were all no better than ruffians, and something else that shall be nameless?

MR. CHAINMAIL

By no means. By depicting them as much worse than they were, not, as you suppose, much better. No one would infer from his pictures that theirs was a much better state of society than this which we live in.

MR. MAC QUEDY

No, nor was it. It was a period of brutality, ignorance, fanaticism, and tyranny; when the land was covered with castles, and every castle contained a gang of banditti, headed by a titled robber, who levied contributions with fire and sword; plundering, torturing, ravishing, burying his captives in loathsome dungeons, and broiling them on gridirons, to force from them the surrender of every particle of treasure which he suspected them of possessing; and fighting every now and then with the neighbouring lords, his conterminal bandits, for the right of marauding on the boundaries. This was the twelfth century, as depicted by all contemporary historians and poets.

MR. CHAINMAIL

No, sir. Weigh the evidence of specific facts; you will find more good than evil. Who was England's greatest hero; the mirror of chivalry, the pattern of honour, the fountain of generosity, the model to all succeeding ages of military glory? Richard the First. There is a king of the twelfth century.

[1] 'Eloquentiæ magister, nisi, tamquam piscator, eam imposuerit hamis escam, quam scierit appetituros esse pisciculos, sine spe prædæ moratur in scopulo.'—PETRONIUS ARBITER.

What was the first step of liberty? Magna Charta. That was the best thing ever done by lords. There are lords of the twelfth century. You must remember, too, that these lords were petty princes, and made war on each other as legitimately as the heads of larger communities did or do. For their system of revenue, it was, to be sure, more rough and summary than that which has succeeded it, but it was certainly less searching and less productive. And as to the people, I content myself with these great points: that every man was armed, every man was a good archer, every man could and would fight effectively, with sword or pike, or even with oaken cudgel; no man would live quietly without beef and ale; if he had them not, he fought till he either got them, or was put out of condition to want them. They were not, and could not be, subjected to that powerful pressure of all the other classes of society, combined by gunpowder, steam, and *fiscality*, which has brought them to that dismal degradation in which we see them now. And there are the people of the twelfth century.

MR. MAC QUEDY

As to your king, the enchanter has done him ample justice, even in your own view. As to your lords and their ladies, he has drawn them too favourably, given them too many of the false colours of chivalry, thrown too attractive a light on their abominable doings. As to the people, he keeps them so much in the background, that he can hardly be said to have represented them at all, much less misrepresented them, which indeed he could scarcely do, seeing that, by your own showing, they were all thieves, ready to knock down any man for what they could not come by honestly.

MR. CHAINMAIL

No, sir. They could come honestly by beef and ale, while they were left to their simple industry. When oppression interfered with them in that, then they stood on the defensive, and fought for what they were not permitted to come by quietly.

MR. MAC QUEDY

If A, being aggrieved by B, knocks down C, do you call that standing on the defensive ?

MR. CHAINMAIL

That depends on who or what C is.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Gentlemen, you will never settle this controversy till you have first settled what is good for man in this world ; the great question, *de finibus*, which has puzzled all philosophers. If the enchanter has represented the twelfth century too brightly for one, and too darkly for the other of you, I should say, as an impartial man, he has represented it fairly. My quarrel with him is, that his works contain nothing worth quoting ; and a book that furnishes no quotations is, *me judice*, no book,—it is a plaything. There is no question about the amusement,—amusement of multitudes ; but if he who amuses us most is to be our enchanter κατ' ἐξοχήν, then my enchanter is the enchanter of Covent Garden.

CHAPTER X

THE VOYAGE (*continued*)

'Continuant nostre routte, navigasmes par trois jours *sans rien descouvrir.*'—RABELAIS.

'THERE is a beautiful structure,' said Mr. Chainmail, as they glided by Lechlade church; 'a subject for the pencil, captain. It is a question worth asking, Mr. Mac Quedy, whether the religious spirit which reared these edifices, and connected with them everywhere an asylum for misfortune, and a provision for poverty, was not better than the commercial spirit, which has turned all the business of modern life into schemes of profit, and processes of fraud and extortion. I do not see, in all your boasted improvements, any compensation for the religious charity of the twelfth century. I do not see any compensation for that kindly feeling which, within their own little communities, bound the several classes of society together, while full scope was left for the development of natural character, wherein individuals differed as conspicuously as in costume. Now, we all wear one conventional dress, one conventional face; we have no bond of union, but pecuniary interest; we talk anything that comes uppermost, for talking's sake, and without expecting to be believed; we have no nature, no simplicity, no picturesqueness: everything about us is as artificial and as complicated as our steam-machinery: our poetry is a kaleidoscope of false imagery, expressing no real feeling, portraying no real existence. I do not see any compensation for the poetry of the twelfth century.'

MR. MAC QUEDY

I wonder to hear you, Mr. Chainmail, talking of the

religious charity of a set of lazy monks, and beggarly friars, who were much more occupied with taking than giving; of whom, those who were in earnest did nothing but make themselves, and everybody about them, miserable, with fastings, and penances, and other such trash; and those who were not, did nothing but guzzle and royster, and, having no wives of their own, took very unbecoming liberties with those of honester men. And as to your poetry of the twelfth century, it is not good for much.

MR. CHAINMAIL

It has, at any rate, what ours wants, truth to nature, and simplicity of diction. The poetry, which was addressed to the people of the dark ages, pleased in proportion to the truth with which it depicted familiar images, and to their natural connexion with the time and place to which they were assigned. In the poetry of our enlightened times, the characteristics of all seasons, soils, and climates, may be blended together, with much benefit to the author's fame as an original genius. The cowslip of a civic poet is always in blossom, his fern is always in full feather; he gathers the celandine, the primrose, the heath-flower, the jasmine, and the chrysanthemum, all on the same day, and from the same spot; his nightingale sings all the year round, his moon is always full, his cygnet is as white as his swan, his cedar is as tremulous as his aspen, and his poplar as embowering as his beech. Thus all nature marches with the march of mind; but, among barbarians, instead of mead and wine, and the best seat by the fire, the reward of such a genius would have been, to be summarily turned out of doors in the snow, to meditate on the difference between day and night, and between December and July. It is an age of liberality, indeed, when not to know an oak from a burdock is no disqualification for sylvan minstrelsy. I am for truth and simplicity.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Let him who loves them read Greek: Greek, Greek, Greek.

MR. MAC QUEDY

If he can, sir.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Very true, sir; if he can. Here is the captain who can. But I think he must have finished his education at some very rigid college, where a quotation, or any other overt act, showing acquaintance with classical literature, was visited with a severe penalty. For my part, I make it my boast that I was not to be so subdued. I could not be abated of a single quotation by all the bumpers in which I was fined.

In this manner they glided over the face of the waters, discussing everything and settling nothing. Mr. Mac Quedy and the Reverend Doctor Folliott had many digladiations on political economy: wherein, each in his own view, Doctor Folliott demolished Mr. Mac Quedy's science, and Mr. Mac Quedy demolished Doctor Folliott's objections.

We would print these dialogues if we thought any one would read them: but the world is not yet ripe for this *haute sagesse Pantagrueline*. We must therefore content ourselves with an *échantillon* of one of the Reverend Doctor's perorations.

'You have given the name of a science to what is yet an imperfect inquiry: and the upshot of your so-called science is this: that you increase the wealth of a nation by increasing in it the quantity of things which are produced by labour: no matter what they are, no matter how produced, no matter how distributed. The greater the quantity of labour that has gone to the production of the quantity of things in a community, the richer is the community. That is your doctrine. Now, I say, if this be so, riches are not the object for a community to aim at. I say, the nation is best off, in relation to other nations, which has the greatest quantity of the common necessaries of life distributed among the greatest number of persons; which has the greatest number of honest hearts and stout arms united in a common interest, willing to offend no one, but ready to fight in defence of their own community, against all the rest of the world, because they have something in it worth fighting for. The moment you admit that one class of things, without any reference to what they respectively cost, is better worth having than another; that a smaller commercial value, with one mode of distribution, is better than a greater commercial value, with another mode of distribution; the whole of that curious

fabric of postulates and dogmas, which you call the science of political economy, and which I call *politicæ œconomiæ inscientia*, tumbles to pieces.'

Mr. Toogood agreed with Mr. Chainmail against Mr. Mac Quedy, that the existing state of society was worse than that of the twelfth century; but he agreed with Mr. Mac Quedy against Mr. Chainmail, that it was in progress to something much better than either,—to which 'something much better' Mr. Toogood and Mr. Mac Quedy attached two very different meanings.

Mr. Chainmail fought with Doctor Folliott the battle of the romantic against the classical in poetry; and Mr. Skionar contended with Mr. Mac Quedy for intuition and synthesis, against analysis and induction in philosophy.

Mr. Philpot would lie along for hours, listening to the gurgling of the water round the prow, and would occasionally edify the company with speculations on the great changes that would be effected in the world by the steam-navigation of rivers: sketching the course of a steam-boat up and down some mighty stream which civilisation had either never visited, or long since deserted; the Missouri and the Columbia, the Oroonoko and the Amazon, the Nile and the Niger, the Euphrates and the Tigris, the Oxus and the Indus, the Ganges and the Hoangho; under the overcanopying forests of the new, or by the long-silent ruins of the ancient, world; through the shapeless mounds of Babylon, or the gigantic temples of Thebes.

Mr. Trillo went on with the composition of his opera, and took the opinions of the young ladies on every step in its progress; occasionally regaling the company with specimens; and wondering at the blindness of Mr. Mac Quedy, who could not, or would not, see that an opera in perfection, being the union of all the beautiful arts,—music, painting, dancing, poetry,—exhibiting female beauty in its most attractive aspects, and in its most becoming costume,—was, according to the well-known precept, *Ingenuas didicisse*, etc., the most efficient instrument of civilisation, and ought to take precedence of all other pursuits in the minds of true philanthropists. The Reverend Doctor Folliott, on these occasions, never failed to say a word or two on Mr. Trillo's side, derived from the practice of the Athenians, and from the combination, in their

Mr. Trillo taking the opinions of the young ladies on the progress of his opera.

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theatre, of all the beautiful arts, in a degree of perfection unknown to the modern world.

Leaving Lechlade, they entered the canal that connects the Thames with the Severn; ascended by many locks; passed by a tunnel three miles long, through the bowels of Sapperton Hill; agreed unanimously that the greatest pleasure derivable from visiting a cavern of any sort was that of getting out of it; descended by many locks again, through the valley of Stroud into the Severn; continued their navigation into the Ellesmere canal; moored their pinnaces in the Vale of Llangollen by the aqueduct of Pontycysyllty; and determined to pass some days in inspecting the scenery, before commencing their homeward voyage.

The captain omitted no opportunity of pressing his suit on Lady Clarinda, but could never draw from her any reply but the same doctrines of worldly wisdom, delivered in a tone of *badinage*, mixed with a certain kindness of manner that induced him to hope she was not in earnest.

But the morning after they had anchored under the hills of the Dee,—whether the lady had reflected more seriously than usual, or was somewhat less in good humour than usual, or the captain was more pressing than usual,—she said to him: 'It must not be, Captain Fitzchrome; "the course of true love never did run smooth": my father must keep his borough, and I must have a town-house and a country-house, and an opera-box, and a carriage. It is not well for either of us that we should flirt any longer: "I must be cruel only to be kind." Be satisfied with the assurance that you alone, of all men, have ever broken my rest. To be sure, it was only for about three nights in all; but that is too much.'

The captain had *le cœur navré*. He took his portfolio under his arm, made up the little *valise* of a pedestrian, and, without saying a word to any one, wandered off at random among the mountains.

After the lapse of a day or two, the captain was missed, and every one marvelled what was become of him. Mr. Philpot thought he must have been exploring a river, and fallen in and got drowned in the process. Mr. Firedamp had no doubt he had been crossing a mountain bog, and had been suddenly deprived of life by the exhalations of marsh miasmata. Mr. Henbane deemed it probable that he had been tempted in

some wood by the large black brilliant berries of the *Atropa Belladonna*, or Deadly Nightshade; and lamented that he had not been by, to administer an infallible antidote. Mr. Eavesdrop hoped the particulars of his fate would be ascertained; and asked if any one present could help him to any authentic anecdotes of their departed friend. The Reverend Doctor Folliott proposed that an inquiry should be instituted as to whether the march of intellect had reached that neighbourhood, as, if so, the captain had probably been made a subject for science. Mr. Mac Quedy said it was no such great matter, to ascertain the precise mode in which the surplus population was diminished by one. Mr. Toogood asseverated that there was no such thing as surplus population, and that the land, properly managed, would maintain twenty times its present inhabitants: and hereupon they fell into a disputation.

Lady Clarinda did not doubt that the captain had gone away designedly: she missed him more than she could have anticipated; and wished she had at least postponed her last piece of cruelty, till the completion of their homeward voyage.

'*The captain omitted no opportunity of pressing his suit.*'

CHAPTER XI

CORRESPONDENCE

'Base is the slave that pays.'
ANCIENT PISTOL.

THE captain was neither drowned nor poisoned, neither miasmatised nor anatomised. But, before we proceed to account for him, we must look back to a young lady, of whom some little notice was taken in the first chapter; and who, though she has since been out of sight, has never with us been out of mind; Miss Susannah Touchandgo, the forsaken of the junior Crotchet, whom we left an inmate of a solitary farm, in one of the deep valleys under the cloudcapt summits of Meirion, comforting her wounded spirit with air and exercise, rustic cheer, music, painting, and poetry, and the prattle of the little Ap Llymrys.

One evening, after an interval of anxious expectation, the farmer, returning from market, brought for her two letters, of which the contents were these:—

DOTANDCARRYONETOWN,
STATE OF APODIDRASKIANA,
1st April 18—

MY DEAR CHILD—I am anxious to learn what are your present position, intention, and prospects. The fairies who dropped gold in your shoe, on the morning when I ceased to be a respectable man in London, will soon find a talismanic channel for transmitting you a stocking full of dollars, which will fit the shoe, as well as the foot of Cinderella fitted her slipper. I am happy to say, I am

again become a respectable man. It was always my ambition to be a respectable man, and I am a very respectable man here, in this new township of a new state, where I have purchased five thousand acres of land, at two dollars an acre, hard cash, and established a very flourishing bank. The notes of Touchandgo and Company, soft cash, are now the exclusive currency of all this vicinity. This is the land in which all men flourish; but there are three classes of men who flourish especially,—methodist preachers, slave-drivers, and paper-money manufacturers; and as one of the latter, I have just painted the word BANK, on a fine slab of maple, which was green and growing when I arrived, and have discounted for the settlers, in my own currency, sundry bills, which are to be paid when the proceeds of the crop they have just sown shall return from New Orleans; so that my notes are the representatives of vegetation that is to be, and I am accordingly a capitalist of the first magnitude. The people here know very well that I ran away from London; but the most of them have run away from some place or other; and they have a great respect for me, because they think I ran away with something worth taking, which few of them had the luck or the wit to do. This gives them confidence in my resources, at the same time that, as there is nothing portable in the settlement except my own notes, they have no fear that I shall run away with them. They know I am thoroughly conversant with the principles of banking, and as they have plenty of industry, no lack of sharpness, and abundance of land, they wanted nothing but capital to organise a flourishing settlement; and this capital I have manufactured to the extent required, at the expense of a small importation of pens, ink, and paper, and two or three inimitable copper plates. I have abundance here of all good things, a good conscience included; for I really cannot see that I have done any wrong. This was my position: I owed half a millon of money; and I had a trifle in my pocket. It was clear that this trifle could never find its way to the right owner. The question was, whether I should keep it, and live like a gentleman; or hand it over to lawyers and commissioners of bankruptcy, and die like a dog on a dunghill. If I could have thought that the said lawyers, etc., had a better title to it than myself, I might

A fairy purse of gold in her slipper.

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have hesitated; but, as such title was not apparent to my satisfaction, I decided the question in my own favour; the right owners, as I have already said, being out of the question altogether. I have always taken scientific views of morals and politics, a habit from which I derive much comfort under existing circumstances.

I hope you adhere to your music, though I cannot hope again to accompany your harp with my flute. My last *andante* movement was too *forte* for those whom it took by surprise. Let not your *allegro vivace* be damped by young Crotchet's desertion, which, though I have not heard it, I take for granted. He is, like myself, a scientific politician, and has an eye as keen as a needle, to his own interest. He has had good luck so far, and is gorgeous in the spoils of many gulls; but I think the Polar Basin and Walrus Company will be too much for him yet. There has been a splendid outlay on credit, and he is the only man, of the original parties concerned, of whom His Majesty's sheriffs could give any account.

I will not ask you to come here. There is no husband for you. The men smoke, drink, and fight, and break more of their own heads than of girls' hearts. Those among them who are musical, sing nothing but psalms. They are excellent fellows in their way, but you would not like them.

Au reste, here are no rents, no taxes, no poor-rates, no tithes, no church-establishment, no routs, no clubs, no rotten boroughs, no operas, no concerts, no theatres, no beggars, no thieves, no king, no lords, no ladies, and only one gentleman, videlicet, your loving father,

TIMOTHY TOUCHANDGO.

P.S.—I send you one of my notes; I can afford to part with it. If you are accused of receiving money from me, you may pay it over to my assignees. Robthetill continues to be my factotum; I say no more of him in this place: he will give you an account of himself.

DOTANDCARRYONETOWN, ETC.

DEAR MISS—Mr. Touchandgo will have told you of our arrival here, of our setting up a bank, and so forth. We came here in a tilted waggon, which served us for parlour,

kitchen, and all. We soon got up a log-house; and, unluckily, we as soon got it down again, for the first fire we made in it, burned down house and all. However, our second experiment was more fortunate; and we are pretty well lodged in a house of three rooms on a floor; I should say the floor, for there is but one.

This new state is free to hold slaves; all the new states have not this privilege: Mr. Touchandgo has bought some, and they are building him a villa. Mr. Touchandgo is in a thriving way, but he is not happy here: he longs for parties and concerts, and a seat in Congress. He thinks it very hard that he cannot buy one with his own coinage, as he used to do in England. Besides, he is afraid of the Regulators, who, if they do not like a man's character, wait upon him and flog him, doubling the dose at stated intervals, till he takes himself off. He does not like this system of administering justice: though I think he has nothing to fear from it. He has the character of having money, which is the best of all characters here, as at home. He lets his old English prejudices influence his opinions of his new neighbours; but I assure you they have many virtues. Though they do keep slaves, they are all ready to fight for their own liberty; and I should not like to be an enemy within reach of one of their rifles. When I say enemy, I include bailiff in the term. One was shot not long ago. There was a trial; the jury gave two dollars damages; the judge said they must find guilty or not guilty; but the counsel for the defendant (they would not call him prisoner) offered to fight the judge upon the point: and as this was said literally, not metaphorically, and the counsel was a stout fellow, the judge gave in. The two dollars damages were not paid after all; for the defendant challenged the foreman to box for double or quits, and the foreman was beaten. The folks in New York made a great outcry about it, but here it was considered all as it should be. So you see, Miss, justice, liberty, and everything else of that kind, are different in different places, just as suits the convenience of those who have the sword in their own hands. Hoping to hear of your health and happiness, I remain, dear Miss, your dutiful servant,

RODERICK ROBTHETILL.

Miss Touchandgo replied as follows, to the first of these letters :—

My dear Father—I am sure you have the best of hearts, and I have no doubt you have acted with the best intentions. My lover, or I should rather say, my fortune's lover, has indeed forsaken me. I cannot say I did not feel it ; indeed, I cried very much ; and the altered looks of people who used to be so delighted to see me, really annoyed me so, that I determined to change the scene altogether. I have come into Wales, and am boarding with a farmer and his wife. Their stock of English is very small ; but I managed to agree with them, and they have four of the sweetest children I ever saw, to whom I teach all I know, and I manage to pick up some Welsh. I have puzzled out a little song, which I think very pretty ; I have translated it into English, and I send it you, with the original air. You shall play it on your flute at eight o'clock every Saturday evening, and I will play and sing it at the same time, and I will fancy that I hear my dear papa accompanying me.

The people in London said very unkind things of you : they hurt me very much at the time ; but now I am out of their way, I do not seem to think their opinion of much consequence. I am sure, when I recollect, at leisure, everything I have seen and heard among them, I cannot make out what they do that is so virtuous, as to set them up for judges of morals. And I am sure they never speak the truth about anything, and there is no sincerity in either their love or their friendship. An old Welsh bard here, who wears a waistcoat embroidered with leeks, and is called the Green Bard of Cadair Idris, says the Scotch would be the best people in the world, if there was nobody but themselves to give them a character : and so I think would the Londoners. I hate the very thought of them, for I do believe they would have broken my heart, if I had not got out of their way. Now I shall write you another letter very soon, and describe to you the country, and the people, and the children, and how I amuse myself, and everything that I think you will like to hear about : and when I seal this letter, I shall drop a kiss on the cover.—Your loving daughter,

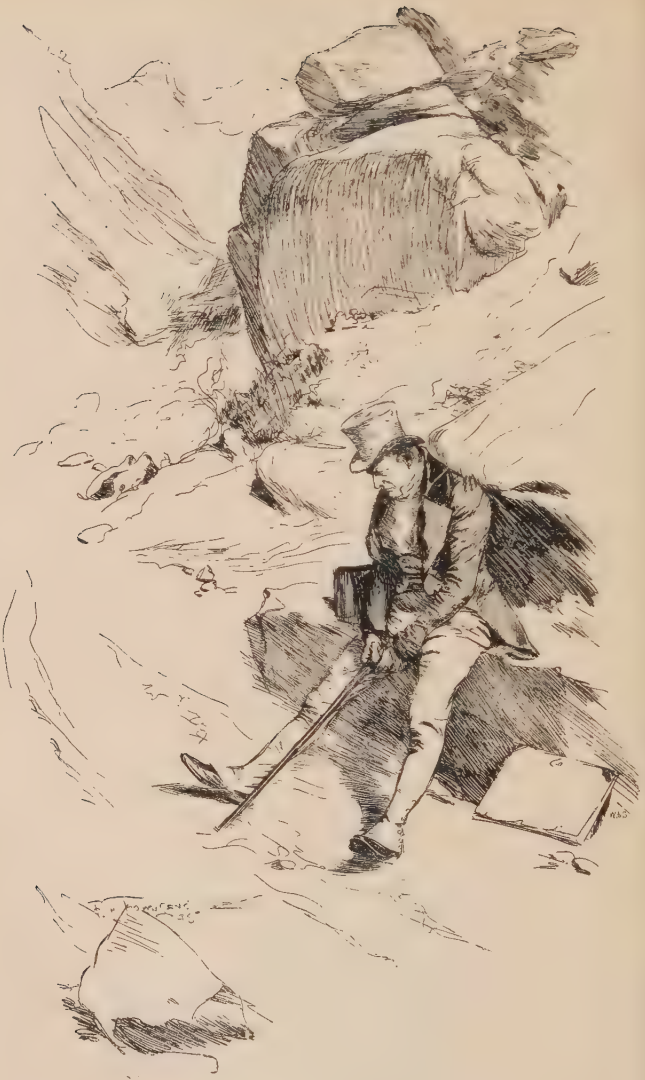
Susannah Touchandgo.

P.S.—Tell Mr. Robthetill I will write to him in a day or two. This is the little song I spoke of:—

Beyond the sea, beyond the sea,
My heart is gone, far, far from me;
And ever on its track will flee
My thoughts, my dreams, beyond the sea.

Beyond the sea, beyond the sea,
The swallow wanders fast and free:
Oh, happy bird! were I like thee,
I, too, would fly beyond the sea.

Beyond the sea, beyond the sea,
Are kindly hearts and social glee:
But here for me they may not be;
My heart is gone beyond the sea.



'Passing many hours in sitting on rocks.'

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CHAPTER XII

THE MOUNTAIN INN

Ὡς ἡδὺ τῷ μισοῦντι τοὺς φαύλους τρόπους
Ἐρημία.

' How sweet to minds that love not sordid ways
Is solitude ! '

MENANDER.

THE captain wandered despondingly up and down hill for several days, passing many hours of each in sitting on rocks ; making, almost mechanically, sketches of waterfalls, and mountain pools ; taking care, nevertheless, to be always before nightfall in a comfortable inn, where, being a temperate man, he whiled away the evening with making a bottle of sherry into negus. His rambles brought him at length into the interior of Merionethshire, the land of all that is beautiful in nature, and all that is lovely in woman.

Here, in a secluded village, he found a little inn, of small pretension and much comfort. He felt so satisfied with his quarters, and discovered every day so much variety in the scenes of the surrounding mountains, that his inclination to proceed farther, diminished progressively.

It is one thing to follow the high road through a country, with every principally remarkable object carefully noted down in a book, taking, as therein directed, a guide, at particular points, to the more recondite sights : it is another to sit down on one chosen spot, especially when the choice is unpremeditated, and from thence, by a series of explorations, to come day by day on unanticipated scenes. The latter process has many advantages over the former ; it is free from the disappointment which attends excited expectation, when imagina-

tion has outstripped reality, and from the accidents that mar the scheme of the tourist's single day, when the valleys may be drenched with rain, or the mountains shrouded with mist.

The captain was one morning preparing to sally forth on his usual exploration, when he heard a voice without, inquiring for a guide to the ruined castle. The voice seemed familiar to him, and going forth into the gateway, he recognised Mr. Chainmail. After greetings and inquiries for the absent; 'You vanished very abruptly, captain,' said Mr. Chainmail, 'from our party on the canal.'

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

To tell you the truth, I had a particular reason for trying the effect of absence from a part of that party.

MR. CHAINMAIL

I surmised as much: at the same time, the unusual melancholy of an in general most vivacious young lady made me wonder at your having acted so precipitately. The lady's heart is yours, if there be truth in signs.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Hearts are not now what they were in the days of the old song: 'Will love be controlled by advice?'

MR. CHAINMAIL

Very true; hearts, heads, and arms have all degenerated, most sadly. We can no more feel the high impassioned love of the ages, which some people have the impudence to call dark, than we can wield King Richard's battle-axe, bend Robin Hood's bow, or flourish the oaken graff of the Pindar of Wakefield. Still we have our tastes and feelings, though they deserve not the name of passions; and some of us may pluck up spirit to try to carry a point, when we reflect that we have to contend with men no better than ourselves.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

We do not now break lances for ladies.

MR. CHAINMAIL

No, nor even bulrushes. We jingle purses for them, flourish paper-money banners, and tilt with scrolls of parchment.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

In which sort of tilting I have been thrown from the saddle. I presume it was not love that led you from the flotilla.

MR. CHAINMAIL

By no means. I was tempted by the sight of an old tower, not to leave this land of ruined castles, without having collected a few hints for the adornment of my baronial hall.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

I understand you live *en famille* with your domestics. You will have more difficulty in finding a lady who would adopt your fashion of living, than one who would prefer you to a richer man.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Very true. I have tried the experiment on several as guests; but once was enough for them: so, I suppose, I shall die a bachelor.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

I see, like some others of my friends, you will give up anything except your hobby.

MR. CHAINMAIL

I will give up anything but my baronial hall.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

You will never find a wife for your purpose, unless in the daughter of some old-fashioned farmer.

MR. CHAINMAIL

No, I thank you. I must have a lady of gentle blood; I shall not marry below my own condition: I am too much of a herald; I have too much of the twelfth century in me for that.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Why then your chance is not much better than mine. A well-born beauty would scarcely be better pleased with your baronial hall, than with my more humble offer of love in a cottage. She must have a town house, and an opera-box, and roll about the streets in a carriage; especially if her father has a rotten borough, for the sake of which he sells his daughter, that he may continue to sell his country. But you were inquiring for a guide to the ruined castle in this vicinity; I know the way, and will conduct you.

The proposal pleased Mr. Chainmail, and they set forth on their expedition.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LAKE—THE RUIN

'Or vieni, Amore, e quà meco t'assetta.'
Orlando Innamorato.

MR. CHAINMAIL

WOULD it not be a fine thing, captain, you being picturesque, and I poetical; you being for the lights and shadows of the present, and I for those of the past; if we were to go together over the ground which was travelled in the twelfth century by Giraldus de Barri, when he accompanied Archbishop Baldwin to preach the crusade?

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Nothing, in my present frame of mind, could be more agreeable to me.

MR. CHAINMAIL

We would provide ourselves with his *Itinerarium;* compare what has been, with what is; contemplate in their decay the castles and abbeys, which he saw in their strength and splendour; and, while you were sketching their remains, I would dispassionately inquire what has been gained by the change.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Be it so.

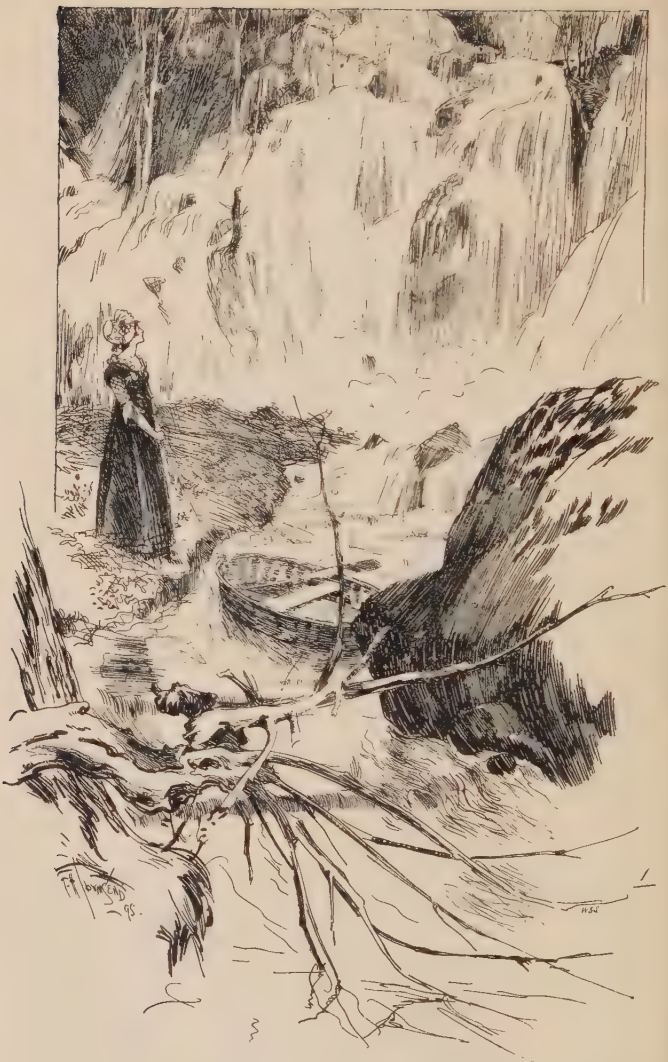
But the scheme was no sooner arranged, than the captain

was summoned to London by a letter on business, which he did not expect to detain him long. Mr. Chainmail, who, like the captain, was fascinated with the inn and the scenery, determined to await his companion's return; and, having furnished him with a list of books, which he was to bring with him from London, took leave of him, and began to pass his days like the heroes of Ariosto, who—

> . . . tutto il giorno, al bel oprar intenti,
> Saliron balze, e traversar torrenti.

One day Mr. Chainmail traced upwards the course of a mountain stream, to a spot where a small waterfall threw itself over a slab of perpendicular rock, which seemed to bar his farther progress. On a nearer view, he discovered a flight of steps, roughly hewn in the rock, on one side of the fall. Ascending these steps, he entered a narrow winding pass, between high and naked rocks, that afforded only space for a rough footpath, carved on one side, at some height above the torrent.

The pass opened on a lake, from which the stream issued, and which lay like a dark mirror, set in a gigantic frame of mountain precipices. Fragments of rock lay scattered on the edge of the lake, some half-buried in the water: Mr. Chainmail scrambled some way over these fragments, till the base of a rock sinking abruptly in the water, effectually barred his progress. He sat down on a large smooth stone; the faint murmur of the stream he had quitted, the occasional flapping of the wings of the heron, and at long intervals, the solitary springing of a trout, were the only sounds that came to his ear. The sun shone brightly half-way down the opposite rocks, presenting, on their irregular faces, strong masses of light and shade. Suddenly he heard the dash of a paddle, and, turning his eyes, saw a solitary and beautiful girl gliding over the lake in a coracle: she was proceeding from the vicinity of the point he had quitted, towards the upper end of the lake. Her apparel was rustic, but there was in its style something more *recherchée*, in its arrangement something more of elegance and precision, than was common to the mountain peasant girl. It had more of the *contadina* of the opera, than of the genuine mountaineer; so at least thought Mr. Chainmail; but she passed so rapidly, and took him so much by surprise, that he



'He saw her land at the farther extremity.'

had little opportunity for accurate observation. He saw her land, at the farther extremity, and disappear among the rocks: he rose from his seat, returned to the mouth of the pass, stepped from stone to stone across the stream, and attempted to pass round by the other side of the lake; but there again the abruptly sinking precipice closed his way.

Day after day he haunted the spot, but never saw again either the damsel or the coracle. At length, marvelling at himself for being so solicitous about the apparition of a peasant girl in a coracle, who could not, by any possibility, be anything to him, he resumed his explorations in another direction.

One day he wandered to the ruined castle, on the seashore, which was not very distant from his inn; and sitting on the rock, near the base of the ruin, was calling up the forms of past ages on the wall of an ivied tower, when on its summit appeared a female figure, whom he recognised in an instant for his nymph of the coracle. The folds of the blue gown pressed by the sea-breeze against one of the most symmetrical of figures, the black feather of the black hat, and the ringleted hair beneath it fluttering in the wind; the apparent peril of her position, on the edge of the mouldering wall, from whose immediate base the rock went down perpendicularly to the sea, presented a singularly interesting combination to the eye of the young antiquary.

Mr. Chainmail had to pass half round the castle, on the land side, before he could reach the entrance: he coasted the dry and bramble-grown moat, crossed the unguarded bridge, passed the unportcullised arch of the gateway, entered the castle court, ascertained the tower, ascended the broken stairs, and stood on the ivied wall. But the nymph of the place was gone. He searched the ruins within and without, but he found not what he sought: he haunted the castle day after day, as he had done the lake, but the damsel appeared no more.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DINGLE

'The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her, and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place,
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty, born of murmuring sound,
Shall pass into her face.'

WORDSWORTH.

MISS SUSANNAH TOUCHANDGO had read the four great poets of Italy, and many of the best writers of France. About the time of her father's downfall, accident threw into her way *Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire;* and from the impression which these made on her, she carried with her into retirement all the works of Rousseau. In the midst of that startling light, which the conduct of old friends on a sudden reverse of fortune throws on a young and inexperienced mind, the doctrines of the philosopher of Geneva struck with double force upon her sympathies: she imbibed the sweet poison, as somebody calls it, of his writings, even to a love of truth; which, every wise man knows, ought to be left to those who can get anything by it. The society of children, the beauties of nature, the solitude of the mountains, became her consolation, and, by degrees, her delight. The gay society from which she had been excluded, remained on her memory only as a disagreeable dream. She imbibed her new monitor's ideas of simplicity of dress, assimilating her own with that of the peasant-girls in the neighbourhood: the black hat, the blue gown, the black stockings, the shoes, tied on the instep.

Pride was, perhaps, at the bottom of the change: she was

"To the black hat she added a black feather."

willing to impose in some measure on herself, by marking a contemptuous indifference to the characteristics of the class of society from which she had fallen.

> And with the food of pride sustained her soul
> In solitude.

It is true that she somewhat modified the forms of her rustic dress: to the black hat she added a black feather, to the blue gown she added a tippet, and a waistband fastened in front with a silver buckle; she wore her black stockings

'Proposed to "keep company" with her.'

very smooth and tight on her ankles, and tied her shoes in tasteful bows, with the nicest possible ribbon. In this apparel, to which, in winter, she added a scarlet cloak, she made dreadful havoc among the rustic mountaineers, many of whom proposed to 'keep company' with her in the Cambrian fashion, an honour which, to their great surprise, she always declined. Among these, Harry Ap-Heather, whose father rented an extensive sheepwalk, and had a thousand she-lambs wandering in the mountains, was the most strenuous in his suit, and the most pathetic in his lamentations for her cruelty.

Miss Susannah often wandered among the mountains alone, even to some distance from the farmhouse. Sometimes

she descended into the bottom of the dingles, to the black rocky beds of the torrents, and dreamed away hours at the feet of the cataracts. One spot in particular, from which she had at first shrunk with terror, became by degrees her favourite haunt. A path turning and returning at acute angles, led down a steep wood-covered slope to the edge of a chasm, where a pool, or resting-place of a torrent, lay far below. A cataract fell in a single sheet into the pool; the pool boiled and bubbled at the base of the fall, but through the greater part of its extent, lay calm, deep, and black, as if the cataract had plunged through it to an unimaginable depth, without disturbing its eternal repose. At the opposite extremity of the pool, the rocks almost met at their summits, the trees of the opposite banks intermingled their leaves, and another cataract plunged from the pool into a chasm, on which the sunbeams never gleamed. High above, on both sides, the steep woody slopes of the dingle soared into the sky; and from a fissure in the rock, on which the little path terminated, a single gnarled and twisted oak stretched itself over the pool, forming a fork with its boughs at a short distance from the rock. Miss Susannah often sat on the rock, with her feet resting on this tree: in time, she made her seat on the tree itself, with her feet hanging over the abyss; and at length, she accustomed herself to lie along upon its trunk, with her side on the mossy bole of the fork, and an arm round one of the branches. From this position a portion of the sky and the woods was reflected in the pool, which, from its bank, was but a mass of darkness. The first time she reclined in this manner, her heart beat audibly; in time, she lay down as calmly as on the mountain heather; the perception of the sublime was probably heightened by an intermingled sense of danger; and perhaps that indifference to life, which early disappointment forces upon sensitive minds, was necessary to the first experiment. There was, in the novelty and strangeness of the position, an excitement which never wholly passed away, but which became gradually subordinate to the influence, at once tranquillising and elevating, of the mingled eternity of motion, sound, and solitude.

One sultry noon, she descended into this retreat with a mind more than usually disturbed by reflections on the past. She lay in her favourite position, sometimes gazing on the cataract; looking sometimes up the steep sylvan acclivities,

into the narrow space of the cloudless ether; sometimes down into the abyss of the pool, and the deep bright-blue reflections that opened another immensity below her. The distressing recollections of the morning, the world and all its littlenesses, faded from her thoughts like a dream; but her wounded and wearied spirit drank in too deeply the tranquillising power of the place, and she dropped asleep upon the tree like a ship-boy on the mast.

At this moment Mr. Chainmail emerged into daylight, on a projection of the opposite rock, having struck down through the woods in search of unsophisticated scenery. The scene he discovered filled him with delight: he seated himself on the rock, and fell into one of his romantic reveries; when suddenly the semblance of a black hat and feather caught his eye among the foliage of the projecting oak. He started up, shifted his position, and got a glimpse of a blue gown. It was his lady of the lake, his enchantress of the ruined castle, divided from him by a barrier, which, at a few yards below, he could almost overleap, yet unapproachable but by a circuit perhaps of many hours. He watched with intense anxiety. To listen if she breathed was out of the question: the noses of a dean and chapter would have been soundless in the roar of the torrent. From her extreme stillness, she appeared to sleep: yet what creature, not desperate, would go wilfully to sleep in such a place? Was she asleep then? Nay, was she alive? She was as motionless as death. Had she been murdered, thrown from above, and caught in the tree? She lay too regularly, and too composedly for such a supposition. She was asleep then, and, in all probability, her waking would be fatal. He shifted his position. Below the pool two beetle-browed rocks nearly overarched the chasm, leaving just such a space at the summit as was within the possibility of a leap; the torrent roared below in a fearful gulf. He paused some time on the brink, measuring the practicability and the danger, and casting every now and then an anxious glance to his sleeping beauty. In one of these glances he saw a slight movement of the blue gown, and, in a moment after, the black hat and feather dropped into the pool. Reflection was lost for a moment, and, by a sudden impulse, he bounded over the chasm.

He stood above the projecting oak; the unknown beauty

lay like the nymph of the scene; her long black hair, which the fall of her hat had disengaged from its fastenings, drooping through the boughs: he saw that the first thing to be done, was to prevent her throwing her feet off the trunk, in the first movements of waking. He sat down on the rock, and placed his feet on the stem, securing her ankles between his own: one of her arms was round a branch of the fork, the other lay loosely on her side. The hand of this arm he endeavoured to reach, by leaning forward from his seat; he approximated, but could not touch it: after several tantalising efforts, he gave up the point in despair. He did not attempt to wake her, because he feared it might have bad consequences, and he resigned himself to expect the moment of her natural waking, determined not to stir from his post, if she should sleep till midnight.

In this period of forced inaction, he could contemplate at leisure the features and form of his charmer. She was not one of the slender beauties of romance; she was as plump as a partridge; her cheeks were two roses, not absolutely damask, yet verging thereupon; her lips twin-cherries, of equal size; her nose regular, and almost Grecian; her forehead high, and delicately fair; her eyebrows symmetrically arched; her eyelashes long, black, and silky, fitly corresponding with the beautiful tresses that hung among the leaves of the oak, like clusters of wandering grapes.[1] Her eyes were yet to be seen; but how could he doubt that their opening would be the rising of the sun, when all that surrounded their fringy portals was radiant as 'the forehead of the morning sky'?

[1] Ἀλήμονα βότρυν ἐθείρας.
NONNUS.

'He sat down on the rock, and placed his feet on the stem, securing her ankles between his own.'

CHAPTER XV

THE FARM

'Da ydyw'r gwaith, rhaid d'we'yd y gwir,
Ar fryniau Sîr Meirionydd ;
Golwg oer o'r gwaela gawn
Mae hi etto yn llawn llawenydd.'

'Though Meirion's rocks, and hills of heath,
Repel the distant sight,
Yet where, than those bleak hills beneath,
Is found more true delight?'

At length the young lady awoke. She was startled at the sudden sight of the stranger, and somewhat terrified at the first perception of her position. But she soon recovered her self-possession, and, extending her hand to the offered hand of Mr. Chainmail, she raised herself up on the tree, and stepped on the rocky bank. Mr. Chainmail solicited permission to attend her to her home, which the young lady graciously conceded. They emerged from the woody dingle, traversed an open heath, wound along a mountain road by the shore of a lake, descended to the deep bed of another stream, crossed it by a series of stepping-stones, ascended to some height on the opposite side, and followed upwards the line of the stream, till the banks opened into a spacious amphitheatre, where stood, in its fields and meadows, the farmhouse of Ap-Llymry.

During this walk, they had kept up a pretty animated conversation. The lady had lost her hat, and, as she turned towards Mr. Chainmail, in speaking to him, there was no envious projection of brim to intercept the beams of those radiant eyes he had been so anxious to see unclosed. There

was in them a mixture of softness and brilliancy, the perfection of the beauty of female eyes, such as some men have passed through life without seeing, and such as no man ever saw, in any pair of eyes, but once; such as can never be seen and forgotten. Young Crotchet had seen it; he had not forgotten it; but he had trampled on its memory, as the renegade tramples on the emblems of a faith, which his interest only, and not his heart or his reason, has rejected.

Her hair streamed over her shoulders; the loss of the black feather had left nothing but the rustic costume, the blue gown, the black stockings, and the ribbon-tied shoes. Her voice had that full soft volume of melody which gives to common speech the fascination of music. Mr. Chainmail could not reconcile the dress of the damsel, with her conversation and manners. He threw out a remote question or two, with the hope of solving the riddle, but, receiving no reply, he became satisfied that she was not disposed to be communicative respecting herself, and, fearing to offend her, fell upon other topics. They talked of the scenes of the mountains, of the dingle, the ruined castle, the solitary lake. She told him, that lake lay under the mountains behind her home, and the coracle and the pass at the extremity, saved a long circuit to the nearest village, whither she sometimes went to inquire for letters.

Mr. Chainmail felt curious to know from whom these letters might be; and he again threw out two or three fishing questions, to which, as before, he obtained no answer.

The only living biped they met in their walk was the unfortunate Harry Ap-Heather, with whom they fell in by the stepping-stones, who, seeing the girl of his heart hanging on another man's arm, and, concluding at once that they were 'keeping company,' fixed on her a mingled look of surprise, reproach, and tribulation; and, unable to control his feelings under the sudden shock, burst into a flood of tears, and blubbered till the rocks re-echoed.

They left him mingling his tears with the stream, and his lamentations with its murmurs. Mr. Chainmail inquired who that strange creature might be, and what was the matter with him. The young lady answered, that he was a very worthy young man, to whom she had been the innocent cause of much unhappiness.

'Burst into a flood of tears, and blubbered till the rocks re-echoed.'

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'I pity him sincerely,' said Mr. Chainmail; and, nevertheless, he could scarcely restrain his laughter at the exceedingly original figure which the unfortunate rustic lover had presented by the stepping-stones.

The children ran out to meet their dear Miss Susan, jumped all round her, and asked what was become of her hat. Ap-Llymry came out in great haste, and invited Mr. Chainmail to walk in and dine: Mr. Chainmail did not wait to be asked twice. In a few minutes the whole party, Miss Susan and Mr. Chainmail, Mr. and Mrs. Ap-Llymry, and progeny, were seated over a clean home-spun tablecloth, ornamented with fowls and bacon, a pyramid of potatoes, another of cabbage, which Ap-Llymry said 'was poiled with the pacon, and as coot as marrow,' a bowl of milk for the children, and an immense brown jug of foaming ale, with which Ap-Llymry seemed to delight in filling the horn of his new guest.

Shall we describe the spacious apartment, which was at once kitchen, hall, and dining-room,—the large dark rafters, the pendent bacon and onions, the strong, old, oaken furniture, the bright and trimly arranged utensils? Shall we describe the cut of Ap-Llymry's coat, the colour and tie of his neckcloth, the number of buttons at his knees,—the structure of Mrs. Ap-Llymry's cap, having lappets over the ears, which were united under the chin, setting forth especially whether the bond of union were a pin or a ribbon? We shall leave this tempting field of interesting expatiation to those whose brains are high-pressure steam engines for spinning prose by the furlong, to be trumpeted in paid-for paragraphs in the quack's corner of newspapers: modern literature having attained the honourable distinction of sharing with blacking and Macassar oil, the space which used to be monopolised by razor-strops and the lottery; whereby that very enlightened community, the reading public, is tricked into the perusal of much exemplary nonsense; though the few who see through the trickery have no reason to complain, since as 'good wine needs no bush,' so, *ex vi oppositi*, these bushes of venal panegyric point out very clearly that the things they celebrate are not worth reading.

The party dined very comfortably in a corner most remote from the fire; and Mr. Chainmail very soon found his head swimming with two or three horns of ale, of a potency to

which even he was unaccustomed. After dinner, Ap-Llymry made him finish a bottle of mead, which he willingly accepted, both as an excuse to remain, and as a drink of the dark ages, which he had no doubt was a genuine brewage, from uncorrupted tradition.

In the meantime, as soon as the cloth was removed, the children had brought out Miss Susannah's harp. She began, without affectation, to play and sing to the children, as was her custom of an afternoon, first in their own language, and their national melodies, then in English; but she was soon interrupted by a general call of little voices for 'Ouf! di giorno.' She complied with the request, and sang the ballad from Paër's 'Camilla': *Un dì carco il mulinaro.*[1] The children were very familiar with every syllable of this ballad, which had been often fully explained to them. They danced in a circle with the burden of every verse, shouting out the chorus with good articulation and joyous energy; and at the end of the second stanza, where the traveller has his nose pinched by his grandmother's ghost, every nose in the party was nipped by a pair of little fingers. Mr. Chainmail, who was not prepared for the process, came in for a very energetic tweak, from a chubby girl that sprang suddenly on his knees for the purpose, and made the roof ring with her laughter.

So passed the time till evening, when Mr. Chainmail moved to depart. But it turned out on inquiry, that he was some miles from his inn, that the way was intricate, and that he must not make any difficulty about accepting the farmer's hospitality till morning. The evening set in with rain: the fire was found agreeable; they drew around it. The young lady made tea; and afterwards, from time to time, at Mr. Chainmail's special request, delighted his ear with passages of ancient music. Then came a supper of lake trout, fried

[1] In this ballad, the terrors of the Black Forest are narrated to an assemblage of domestics and peasants, who, at the end of every stanza, dance in a circle round the narrator. The second stanza is as follows:

Una notte in un stradotto
Un incauto s'inoltrò;
E uno strillo udì di botto
Che l'orecchio gl'intronò:
Era l'ombra di sua nonna,
Che pel naso lo pigliò.
Ouf! di giorno nè di sera,
Non passiam la selva nera.
[*Ballano in giro.*

on the spot, and thrown, smoking hot, from the pan to the plate. Then came a brewage, which the farmer called his nightcap, of which he insisted on Mr. Chainmail's taking his full share. After which, the gentleman remembered nothing, till he awoke, the next morning, to the pleasant consciousness, that he was under the same roof with one of the most fascinating creatures under the canopy of heaven.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NEWSPAPER

Ποίας δ' ἀποσπασθεῖσα φύτλας
'Ορέων κευθμῶνας ἔχει σκιοέντων ;

'Sprung from what line, adorns the maid
These valleys deep in mountain shade?'
PIND. *Pyth.* ix.

MR. CHAINMAIL forgot the captain and the route of Giraldus de Barri. He became suddenly satisfied that the ruined castle in his present neighbourhood was the best possible specimen of its class, and that it was needless to carry his researches further.

He visited the farm daily : found himself always welcome ; flattered himself that the young lady saw him with pleasure, and dragged a heavier chain at every new parting from Miss Susan, as the children called his nymph of the mountains. What might be her second name, he had vainly endeavoured to discover.

Mr. Chainmail was in love : but the determination he had long before formed and fixed in his mind, to marry only a lady of gentle blood, without a blot in her escutcheon, repressed the declarations of passion which were often rising to his lips. In the meantime, he left no means untried, to pluck out the heart of her mystery.

The young lady soon divined his passion, and penetrated his prejudices. She began to look on him with favourable eyes ; but she feared her name and parentage would present an insuperable barrier to his feudal pride.

Things were in this state when the captain returned, and unpacked his maps and books in the parlour of the inn.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Really, captain, I find so many objects of attraction in this neighbourhood, that I would gladly postpone our purpose.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Undoubtedly, this neighbourhood has many attractions; but there is something very inviting in the scheme you laid down.

MR. CHAINMAIL

No doubt, there is something very tempting in the route of Giraldus de Barri. But there are better things in this vicinity even than that. To tell you the truth, captain, I have fallen in love.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

What! while I have been away?

MR. CHAINMAIL

Even so.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

The plunge must have been very sudden, if you are already over head and ears.

MR. CHAINMAIL

As deep as Llyn-y-dreiddiad-vrawd.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

And what may that be?

MR. CHAINMAIL

A pool not far off: a resting-place of a mountain stream which is said to have no bottom. There is a tradition connected with it; and here is a ballad on it, at your service.

LLYN-Y-DREIDDIAD-VRAWD

THE POOL OF THE DIVING FRIAR

Gwenwynwyn withdrew from the feasts of his hall :
He slept very little, he prayed not at all :
He pondered, and wandered, and studied alone ;
And sought, night and day, the philosopher's stone.

He found it at length, and he made its first proof
By turning to gold all the lead of his roof :
Then he bought some magnanimous heroes, all fire,
Who lived but to smite and be smitten for hire.

With these, on the plains like a torrent he broke ;
He filled the whole country with flame and with smoke ;
He killed all the swine, and he broached all the wine ;
He drove off the sheep, and the beeves, and the kine ;

He took castles and towns ; he cut short limbs and lives ;
He made orphans and widows of children and wives :
This course many years he triumphantly ran,
And did mischief enough to be called a great man.

When, at last, he had gained all for which he had striven,
He bethought him of buying a passport to heaven ;
Good and great as he was, yet he did not well know,
How soon, or which way, his great spirit might go.

He sought the grey friars, who, beside a wild stream,
Refected their frames on a primitive scheme ;
The gravest and wisest Gwenwynwyn found out,
All lonely and ghostly, and angling for trout.

Below the white dash of a mighty cascade,
Where a pool of the stream a deep resting-place made,
And rock-rooted oaks stretched their branches on high,
The friar stood musing, and throwing his fly.

To him said Gwenwynwyn : 'Hold, father, here's store,
For the good of the church, and the good of the poor' ;
Then he gave him the stone ; but, ere more he could speak,
Wrath came on the friar, so holy and meek :

He had stretched forth his hand to receive the red gold,
And he thought himself mocked by Gwenwynwyn the Bold ;
And in scorn of the gift, and in rage at the giver,
He jerked it immediately into the river.

'The diving friar.'

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Gwenwynwyn, aghast, not a syllable spake ;
The philosopher's stone made a duck and a drake :
Two systems of circles a moment were seen,
And the stream smoothed them off, as they never had been.

Gwenwynwyn regained, and uplifted his voice :
'O friar, grey friar, full rash was thy choice ;
The stone, the good stone, which away thou hast thrown,
Was the stone of all stones, the philosopher's stone !'

The friar looked pale, when his error he knew ;
The friar looked red, and the friar looked blue ;
And heels over head, from the point of a rock,
He plunged, without stopping to pull off his frock.

He dived very deep, but he dived all in vain,
The prize he had slighted he found not again :
Many times did the friar his diving renew,
And deeper and deeper the river still grew.

Gwenwynwyn gazed long, of his senses in doubt,
To see the grey friar a diver so stout :
Then sadly and slowly his castle he sought,
And left the friar diving, like dabchick distraught.

Gwenwynwyn fell sick with alarm and despite,
Died, and went to the devil, the very same night :
The magnanimous heroes he held in his pay,
Sacked his castle, and marched with the plunder away.

No knell on the silence of midnight was rolled,
For the flight of the soul of Gwenwynwyn the Bold :
The brethren, unfeed, let the mighty ghost pass,
Without praying a prayer, or intoning a mass.

The friar haunted ever beside the dark stream ;
The philosopher's stone was his thought and his dream :
And day after day, ever head under heels
He dived all the time he could spare from his meals.

He dived, and he dived, to the end of his days,
As the peasants oft witnessed with fear and amaze :
The mad friar's diving-place long was their theme,
And no plummet can fathom that pool of the stream.

And still, when light clouds on the midnight winds ride,
If by moonlight you stray on the lone riverside,
The ghost of the friar may be seen diving there,
With head in the water, and heels in the air.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Well, your ballad is very pleasant: you shall show me the scene, and I will sketch it; but just now I am more interested about your love. What heroine of the twelfth century has risen from the ruins of the old castle, and looked down on you from the ivied battlements?

MR. CHAINMAIL

You are nearer the mark than you suppose. Even from those battlements, a heroine of the twelfth century has looked down on me.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Oh! some vision of an ideal beauty. I suppose the whole will end in another tradition and a ballad.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Genuine flesh and blood; as genuine as Lady Clarinda. I will tell you the story.

Mr. Chainmail narrated his adventures.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Then you seem to have found what you wished. Chance has thrown in your way what none of the gods would have ventured to promise you.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Yes, but I know nothing of her birth and parentage. She tells me nothing of herself, and I have no right to question her directly.

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

She appears to be expressly destined for the light of your baronial hall. Introduce me: in this case, two heads are better than one.

'Harry retreated with backward steps, and tumbled over a cur, which immediately fastened on his rear.'

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MR. CHAINMAIL

No, I thank you. Leave me to manage my chance of a prize, and keep you to your own chance of a——

CAPTAIN FITZCHROME

Blank. As you please. Well, I will pitch my tent here, till I have filled my portfolio, and shall be glad of as much of your company as you can spare from more attractive society.

Matters went on pretty smoothly for several days, when an unlucky newspaper threw all into confusion. Mr. Chainmail received newspapers by the post, which came in three times a week. One morning, over their half-finished breakfast, the captain had read half a newspaper very complacently, when suddenly he started up in a frenzy, hurled over the breakfast-table, and, bouncing from the apartment, knocked down Harry Ap-Heather, who was coming in at the door to challenge his supposed rival to a boxing-match.

Harry sprang up, in a double rage, and intercepted Mr. Chainmail's pursuit of the captain, placing himself in the doorway, in a pugilistic attitude. Mr. Chainmail, not being disposed for this mode of combat, stepped back into the parlour, took the poker in his right hand, and displacing the loose bottom of a large elbow chair, threw it over his left arm, as a shield. Harry, not liking the aspect of the enemy in this imposing attitude, retreated with backward steps into the kitchen, and tumbled over a cur, which immediately fastened on his rear.

Mr. Chainmail, half-laughing, half-vexed, anxious to overtake the captain, and curious to know what was the matter with him, pocketed the newspaper, and sallied forth, leaving Harry roaring for a doctor and tailor, to repair the lacerations of his outward man.

Mr. Chainmail could find no trace of the captain. Indeed, he sought him but in one direction, which was that leading to the farm; where he arrived in due time, and found Miss Susan alone. He laid the newspaper on the table, as was his custom, and proceeded to converse with the young lady: a conversation of many pauses, as much of signs as of words.

The young lady took up the paper, and turned it over and over, while she listened to Mr. Chainmail, whom she found every day more and more agreeable, when, suddenly, her eye glanced on something which made her change colour, and dropping the paper on the ground, she rose from her seat, exclaiming: 'Miserable must she be who trusts any of your faithless sex! never, never, never, will I endure such misery twice.' And she vanished up the stairs. Mr. Chainmail was petrified. At length, he cried aloud: 'Cornelius Agrippa must have laid a spell on this accursed newspaper'; and was turning it over, to look for the source of the mischief, when Mrs. Ap-Llymry made her appearance.

MRS. AP-LLYMRY

What have you done to poor dear Miss Susan? She is crying ready to break her heart.

MR. CHAINMAIL

So help me the memory of Richard Cœur de Lion, I have not the most distant notion of what is the matter.

MRS. AP-LLYMRY

Oh, don't tell me, sir; you must have ill-used her. I know how it is. You have been keeping company with her, as if you wanted to marry her; and now, all at once, you have been trying to make her your mistress. I have seen such tricks more than once, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

MR. CHAINMAIL

My dear madam, you wrong me utterly. I have none but the kindest feelings, and the most honourable purposes towards her. She has been disturbed by something she has seen in this rascally paper.

MRS. AP-LLYMRY

Why, then, the best thing you can do is to go away, and come again to-morrow.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Not I, indeed, madam. Out of this house I stir not, till I have seen the young lady, and obtained a full explanation.

MRS. AP-LLYMRY

I will tell Miss Susan what you say. Perhaps she will come down.

Mr. Chainmail sate with as much patience as he could command, running over the paper, from column to column. At length, he lighted on an announcement of the approaching marriage of Lady Clarinda Bossnowl with Mr. Crotchet the younger. This explained the captain's discomposure, but the cause of Miss Susan's was still to be sought: he could not know that it was one and the same.

Presently, the sound of the longed-for step was heard on the stairs; the young lady reappeared, and resumed her seat: her eyes showed that she had been weeping. The gentleman was now exceedingly puzzled how to begin, but the young lady relieved him by asking, with great simplicity: 'What do you wish to have explained, sir?'

MR. CHAINMAIL

I wish, if I may be permitted, to explain myself to you. Yet could I first wish to know what it was that disturbed you in this unlucky paper. Happy should I be if I could remove the cause of your inquietude!

MISS SUSANNAH

The cause is already removed. I saw something that excited painful recollections; nothing that I could now wish otherwise than as it is.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Yet, may I ask why it is that I find one so accomplished, living in this obscurity, and passing only by the name of Miss Susan?

MISS SUSANNAH

The world and my name are not friends. I have left the world, and wish to remain for ever a stranger to all whom I once knew in it.

MR. CHAINMAIL

You can have done nothing to dishonour your name.

MISS SUSANNAH

No, sir. My father has done that of which the world disapproves, in matters of which I pretend not to judge. I have suffered for it as I will never suffer again. My name is my own secret: I have no other, and that is one not worth knowing. You see what I am, and all I am. I live according to the condition of my present fortune, and here, so living, I have found tranquillity.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Yet, I entreat you, tell me your name.

MISS SUSANNAH

Why, sir?

MR. CHAINMAIL

Why, but to throw my hand, my heart, my fortune, at your feet, if——

MISS SUSANNAH

If my name be worthy of them.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Nay, nay, not so; if your hand and heart are free.

MISS SUSANNAH

My hand and heart are free; but they must be sought from myself, and not from my name.

She fixed her eyes on him, with a mingled expression of mistrust, of kindness, and of fixed resolution, which the far-gone *innamorato* found irresistible.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Then from yourself alone I seek them.

MISS SUSANNAH

Reflect. You have prejudices on the score of parentage. I have not conversed with you so often, without knowing what they are. Choose between them and me. I too have my own prejudices on the score of personal pride.

MR. CHAINMAIL

I would choose you from all the world, were you even the daughter of the *exécuteur des hautes œuvres*, as the heroine of a romantic story I once read, turned out to be.

MISS SUSANNAH

I am satisfied. You have now a right to know my history, and if you repent, I absolve you from all obligations.

She told him her history; but he was out of the reach of repentance. 'It is true,' as at a subsequent period he said to the captain, 'she is the daughter of a money-changer; one who, in the days of Richard the First, would have been plucked by the beard in the streets: but she is, according to modern notions, a lady of gentle blood. As to her father's running away, that is a minor consideration: I have always understood, from Mr. Mac Quedy, who is a great oracle in this way, that promises to pay ought not to be kept; the essence of a safe and economical currency being an interminable series of broken promises. There seems to be a difference among the learned as to the way in which the promises ought to be broken; but

I am not deep enough in their casuistry to enter into such nice distinctions.'

In a few days there was a wedding, a pathetic leave-taking of the farmer's family, a hundred kisses from the bride to the children, and promises twenty times reclaimed and renewed, to visit them in the ensuing year.

CHAPTER XVII

THE INVITATION

'A cup of wine, that's brisk and fine,
And drink unto the leman mine.'
MASTER SILENCE.

THIS veridicous history began in May, and the occurrences already narrated have carried it on to the middle of autumn. Stepping over the interval to Christmas, we find ourselves in our first locality, among the chalk hills of the Thames; and we discover our old friend, Mr. Crotchet, in the act of accepting an invitation, for himself, and any friends who might be with him, to pass their Christmas Day at Chainmail Hall, after the fashion of the twelfth century. Mr. Crotchet had assembled about him, for his own Christmas festivities, nearly the same party which was introduced to the reader in the spring. Three of that party were wanting. Dr. Morbific, by inoculating himself once too often with non-contagious matter, had explained himself out of the world. Mr. Henbane had also departed, on the wings of an infallible antidote. Mr. Eavesdrop, having printed in a magazine some of the after-dinner conversations at the castle, had had sentence of exclusion passed upon him, on the motion of the Reverend Doctor Folliott, as a flagitious violator of the confidences of private life.

Miss Crotchet had become Lady Bossnowl, but Lady Clarinda had not yet changed her name to Crotchet. She had, on one pretence and another, procrastinated the happy event, and the gentleman had not been very pressing; she had, however, accompanied her brother and sister-in-law, to pass Christmas at Crotchet Castle. With these, Mr. Mac Quedy, Mr. Philpot, Mr. Trillo, Mr. Skionar, Mr. Toogood, and Mr.

Firedamp, were sitting at breakfast, when the Reverend Doctor Folliott entered and took his seat at the table.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Well, Mr. Mac Quedy, it is now some weeks since we have met: how goes on the march of mind?

MR. MAC QUEDY

Nay, sir; I think you may see that with your own eyes.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Sir, I have seen it, much to my discomfiture. It has marched into my rickyard, and set my stacks on fire, with chemical materials, most scientifically compounded. It has marched up to the door of my vicarage, a hundred and fifty strong; ordered me to surrender half my tithes; consumed all the provisions I had provided for my audit feast, and drunk up my old October. It has marched in through my back-parlour shutters, and out again with my silver spoons, in the dead of the night. The policeman who has been down to examine, says my house has been broken open on the most scientific principles. All this comes of education.

MR. MAC QUEDY

I rather think it comes of poverty.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No, sir. Robbery perhaps comes of poverty, but scientific principles of robbery come of education. I suppose the learned friend has written a sixpenny treatise on mechanics, and the rascals who robbed me have been reading it.

MR. CROTCHET

Your house would have been very safe, Doctor, if they had had no better science than the learned friend's to work with.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Well, sir, that may be. Excellent potted char. The Lord deliver me from the learned friend.

MR. CROTCHET

Well, Doctor, for your comfort, here is a declaration of the learned friend's that he will never take office.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Then, sir, he will be in office next week. Peace be with him. Sugar and cream.

MR. CROTCHET

But, Doctor, are you for Chainmail Hall on Christmas Day?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

That am I, for there will be an excellent dinner, though, peradventure, grotesquely served.

MR. CROTCHET

I have not seen my neighbour since he left us on the canal.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

He has married a wife, and brought her home.

LADY CLARINDA

Indeed! If she suits him, she must be an oddity: it will be amusing to see them together.

LORD BOSSNOWL

Very amusing. He! He!

MR. FIREDAMP

Is there any water about Chainmail Hall?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

An old moat.

MR. FIREDAMP

I shall die of *malaria.*

MR. TRILLO

Shall we have any music?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

An old harper.

MR. TRILLO

Those fellows are always horridly out of tune. What will he play?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Old songs and marches.

MR. SKIONAR

Amongst so many old things, I hope we shall find Old Philosophy.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

An old woman.

MR. PHILPOT

Perhaps an old map of the river in the twelfth century.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No doubt.

MR. MAC QUEDY

How many more old things?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Old hospitality; old wine; old ale; all the images of old England; an old butler.

MR. TOOGOOD

Shall we all be welcome?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Heartily; you will be slapped on the shoulder, and called Old boy.

LORD BOSSNOWL

I think we should all go in our old clothes. He! He!

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

You will sit on old chairs, round an old table, by the light of old lamps, suspended from pointed arches, which, Mr. Chainmail says, first came into use in the twelfth century; with old armour on the pillars, and old banners in the roof.

LADY CLARINDA

And what curious piece of antiquity is the lady of the mansion?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No antiquity there; none.

LADY CLARINDA

Who was she?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

That I know not.

LADY CLARINDA

Have you seen her?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I have.

LADY CLARINDA

Is she pretty?

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

More,—beautiful. A subject for the pen of Nonnus, or the pencil of Zeuxis. Features of all loveliness, radiant with all virtue and intelligence. A face for Antigone. A form at once plump and symmetrical, that, if it be decorous to divine it by externals, would have been a model for the Venus of Cnidos. Never was anything so goodly to look on, the present company excepted, and poor dear Mrs. Folliott. She reads moral philosophy, Mr. Mac Quedy, which indeed she might as well let alone; she reads Italian poetry, Mr. Skionar; she sings Italian music, Mr. Trillo; but, with all this, she has the greatest of female virtues, for she superintends the household, and looks after her husband's dinner. I believe she was a mountaineer: *παρθένος οὐρεσίφοιτος, ἐρήμαδι σύντροφος ὕλῃ*,[1] as Nonnus sweetly sings.

[1] A mountain-wandering maid,
Twin-nourished with the solitary wood.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAINMAIL HALL

'Vous autres dictes que ignorance est mere de tous maulx, et dictes vray : mais toutesfoys vous ne la bannissez mye de vos entendemens, et vivez en elle, avecques elle, et par elle. C'est pourquoy tant de maulx vous meshaignent de jour en jour.'—RABELAIS, l. 5, c. 7.

THE party which was assembled on Christmas Day in Chainmail Hall comprised all the guests of Crotchet Castle, some of Mr. Chainmail's other neighbours, all his tenants and domestics, and Captain Fitzchrome. The hall was spacious and lofty ; and with its tall fluted pillars and pointed arches, its windows of stained glass, its display of arms and banners intermingled with holly and mistletoe, its blazing cressets and torches, and a stupendous fire in the centre, on which blocks of pine were flaming and crackling, had a striking effect on eyes unaccustomed to such a dining-room. The fire was open on all sides, and the smoke was caught and carried back, under a funnel-formed canopy, into a hollow central pillar. This fire was the line of demarcation between gentle and simple, on days of high festival. Tables extended from it on two sides, to nearly the end of the hall.

Mrs. Chainmail was introduced to the company. Young Crotchet felt some revulsion of feeling at the unexpected sight of one whom he had forsaken, but not forgotten, in a condition apparently so much happier than his own. The lady held out her hand to him with a cordial look of more than forgiveness ; it seemed to say that she had much to thank him for. She was the picture of a happy bride, *rayonnante de joie et d'amour.*

Mr. Crotchet told the Reverend Doctor Folliott the news of

the morning. 'As you predicted,' he said, 'your friend, the learned friend, is in office; he has also a title; he is now Sir Guy de Vaux.'

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Thank Heaven for that! he is disarmed from further mischief. It is something, at any rate, to have that hollow and wind-shaken reed rooted up for ever from the field of public delusion.

MR. CROTCHET

I suppose, Doctor, you do not like to see a great reformer in office; you are afraid for your vested interests.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Not I, indeed, sir; my vested interests are very safe from all such reformers as the learned friend. I vaticinate what will be the upshot of all his schemes of reform. He will make a speech of seven hours' duration, and this will be its quintessence: that, seeing the exceeding difficulty of putting salt on the bird's tail, it will be expedient to consider the best method of throwing dust in the bird's eyes. All the rest will be—

Τιτιτιτιτιμπρό.
Ποποποί, ποποποί.
Τιοτιοτιοτιοτιοτιοτίγξ.
Κικκαβαῦ, κικκαβαῦ.
Τοροτοροτοροτορολιλιλίγξ.[1]

as Aristophanes has it; and so I leave him, in Nephelococcygia.[2]

Mr. Mac Quedy came up to the divine as Mr. Crotchet left him, and said: 'There is one piece of news which the old gentleman has not told you. The great firm of Catchflat and Company, in which young Crotchet is a partner, has stopped payment.'

[1] Sounds without meaning; imitative of the voices of birds. From the Ορνιθες of Aristophanes.

[2] 'Cuckoo-city-in-the-clouds.' From the same comedy.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Bless me! that accounts for the young gentleman's melancholy. I thought they would overreach themselves with their own tricks. The day of reckoning, Mr. Mac Quedy, is the point which your paper-money science always leaves out of view.

MR. MAC QUEDY

I do not see, sir, that the failure of Catchflat and Company has anything to do with my science.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

It has this to do with it, sir, that you would turn the whole nation into a great paper-money shop, and take no thought of the day of reckoning. But the dinner is coming. I think you, who are so fond of paper promises, should dine on the bill of fare.

The harper at the head of the hall struck up an ancient march, and the dishes were brought in, in grand procession.

The boar's head, garnished with rosemary, with a citron in its mouth, led the van. Then came tureens of plum-porridge; then a series of turkeys, and, in the midst of them, an enormous sausage, which it required two men to carry. Then came geese and capons, tongues and hams, the ancient glory of the Christmas pie, a gigantic plum-pudding, a pyramid of minced pies, and a baron of beef bringing up the rear.

'It is something new under the sun,' said the divine, as he sat down, 'to see a great dinner without fish.'

MR. CHAINMAIL

Fish was for fasts, in the twelfth century.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Well, sir, I prefer our reformed system of putting fasts and feasts together. Not but here is ample indemnity.

Ale and wine flowed in abundance. The dinner passed off merrily: the old harper playing all the while the oldest music in his repertory. The tables being cleared, he indemnified himself for lost time at the lower end of the hall, in company with the old butler and the other domestics, whose attendance on the banquet had been indispensable.

The scheme of Christmas gambols, which Mr. Chainmail had laid for the evening, was interrupted by a tremendous clamour without.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

What have we here? Mummers?

MR. CHAINMAIL

Nay, I know not. I expect none.

'Who is there?' he added, approaching the door of the hall.

'Who is there?' vociferated the divine, with the voice of Stentor.

'Captain Swing,' replied a chorus of discordant voices.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Ho, ho! here is a piece of the dark ages we did not bargain for. Here is the Jacquerie. Here is the march of mind with a witness.

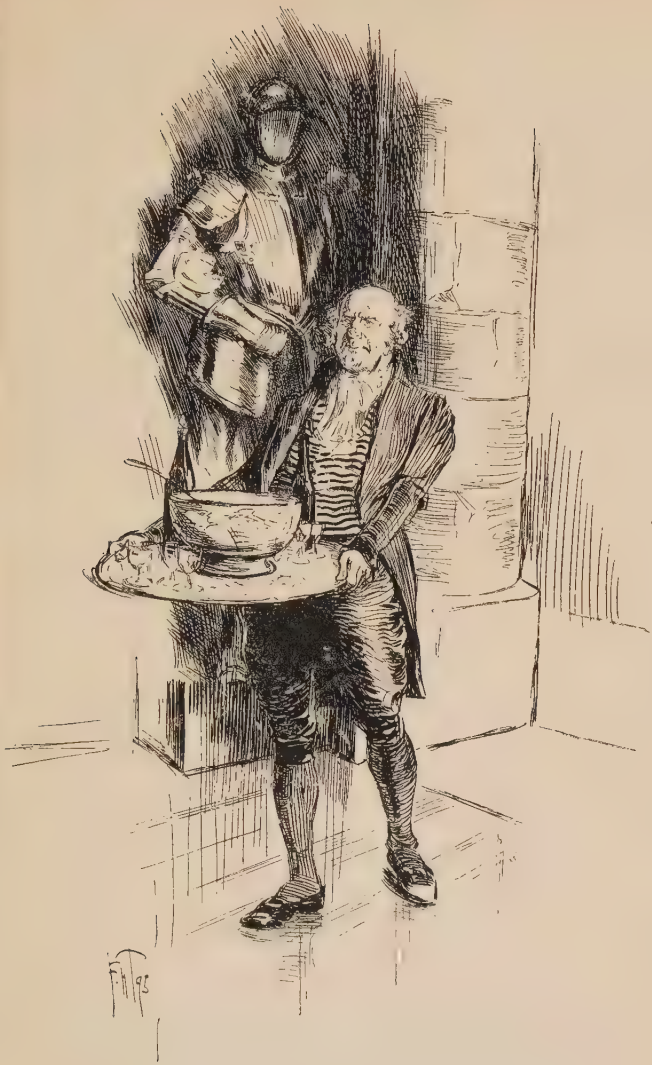
MR. MAC QUEDY

Do you not see that you have brought disparates together? the Jacquerie and the march of mind.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Not at all, sir. They are the same thing, under different names. Πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφὴ μία.[1] What was Jacquerie in the dark ages, is the march of mind in this very enlightened one—very enlightened one.

[1] 'One shape of many names.'
ÆSCHYLUS, *Prometheus.*



An old butler.

MR. CHAINMAIL

The cause is the same in both; poverty in despair.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Very likely; but the effect is extremely disagreeable.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

It is the natural result, Mr. Mac Quedy, of that system of state seamanship which your science upholds. Putting the crew on short allowance, and doubling the rations of the officers, is the sure way to make a mutiny on board a ship in distress, Mr. Mac Quedy.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Eh! sir, I uphold no such system as that. I shall set you right as to cause and effect. Discontent increases with the increase of information.[1] That is all.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I said it was the march of mind. But we have not time for discussing cause and effect now. Let us get rid of the enemy.

And he vociferated at the top of his voice, 'What do you want here?'

'Arms, arms,' replied a hundred voices. 'Give us the arms.'

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

You see, Mr. Chainmail, this is the inconvenience of

[1] This looks so like caricature (a thing abhorrent to our candour), that we must give authority for it. 'We ought to look the evil manfully in the face, and not amuse ourselves with the dreams of fancy. The discontent of the labourers in our times is rather a proof of their superior information than of their deterioration.'—*Morning Chronicle*, 20th December 1830.

keeping an armoury, not fortified with sand bags, green bags, and old bags of all kinds.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Just give them the old spits and toasting irons, and they will go away quietly.

MR. CHAINMAIL

My spears and swords! not without my life. These assailants are all aliens to my land and house. My men will fight for me, one and all. This is the fortress of beef and ale.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Eh! sir, when the rabble is up, it is very indiscriminating. You are e'en suffering for the sins of Sir Simon Steeltrap, and the like, who have pushed the principle of accumulation a little too far.

MR. CHAINMAIL

The way to keep the people down, is kind and liberal usage.

MR. MAC QUEDY

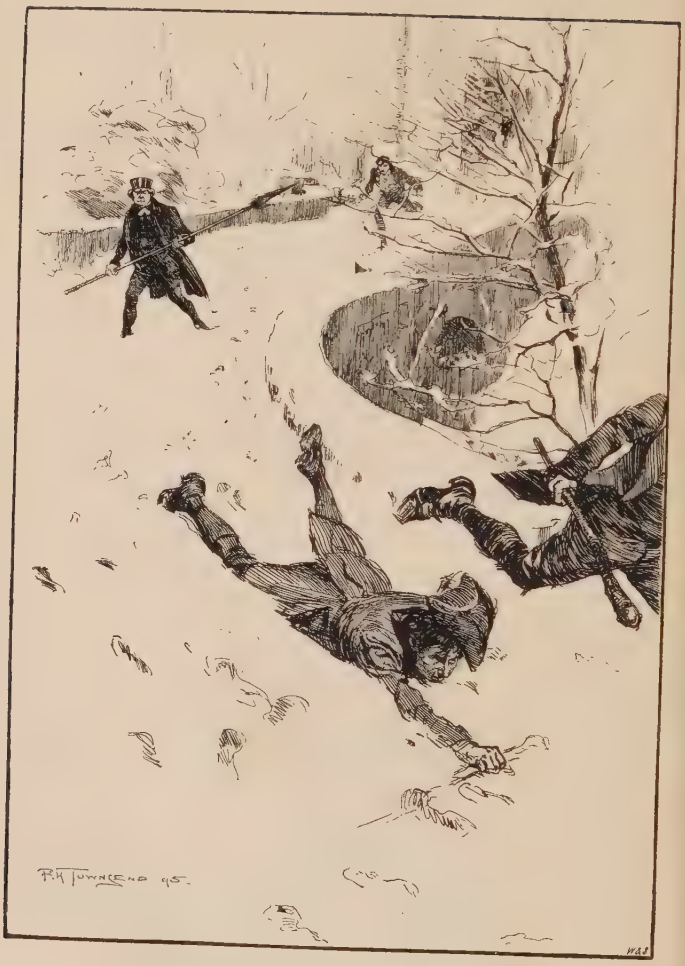
That is very well (where it can be afforded), in the way of prevention; but in the way of cure, the operation must be more drastic. (*Taking down a battle-axe.*) I would fain have a good blunderbuss charged with slugs.

MR. CHAINMAIL

When I suspended these arms for ornament, I never dreamed of their being called into use.

MR. SKIONAR

Let me address them. I never failed to convince an audience that the best thing they could do was to go away.



'Seized a long lance, and tilted out on the rabble.'

MR. MAC QUEDY

Eh! sir, I can bring them to that conclusion in less time than you.

MR. CROTCHET

I have no fancy for fighting. It is a very hard case upon a guest, when the latter end of a feast is the beginning of a fray.

MR. MAC QUEDY

Give them the old iron.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Give them the weapons! *Pessimo, medius fidius, exemplo.*[1] Forbid it the spirit of *Frère Jean des Entommeures!* No! let us see what the church militant, in the armour of the twelfth century, will do against the march of mind. Follow me who will, and stay who list. Here goes: *Pro aris et focis!* that is, for tithe pigs and fires to roast them!

He clapped a helmet on his head, seized a long lance, threw open the gates, and tilted out on the rabble, side by side with Mr. Chainmail, followed by the greater portion of the male inmates of the hall, who had armed themselves at random.

The rabble-rout, being unprepared for such a sortie, fled in all directions, over hedge and ditch.

Mr. Trillo stayed in the hall, playing a march on the harp, to inspirit the rest to sally out. The water-loving Mr. Philpot had diluted himself with so much wine, as to be quite *hors de combat.* Mr. Toogood, intending to equip himself in purely defensive armour, contrived to slip a ponderous coat of mail over his shoulders, which pinioned his arms to his sides; and in this condition, like a chicken trussed for roasting, he was thrown down behind a pillar, in the first rush of the sortie. Mr. Crotchet seized the occurrence as a pretext for staying

[1] 'A most pernicious example, by Hercules!'
PETRONIUS ARBITER.

with him, and passed the whole time of the action in picking him out of his shell.

'Phew!' said the divine, returning; 'an inglorious victory: but it deserves a devil and a bowl of punch.'

MR. CHAINMAIL

A wassail-bowl.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No, sir. No more of the twelfth century for me.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Nay, Doctor. The twelfth century has backed you well. Its manners and habits, its community of kind feelings between master and man, are the true remedy for these ebullitions.

MR. TOOGOOD

Something like it: improved by my diagram: arts for arms.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

No wassail-bowl for me. Give me an unsophisticated bowl of punch, which belongs to that blissful middle period, after the Jacquerie was down, and before the march of mind was up. But, see, who is floundering in the water?

Proceeding to the edge of the moat, they fished up Mr. Firedamp, who had missed his way back, and tumbled in. He was drawn out, exclaiming, 'that he had taken his last dose of *malaria* in this world.'

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Tut, man; dry clothes, a turkey's leg and rump, well devilled, and a quart of strong punch, will set all to rights.

'Wood embers,' said Mr. Firedamp, when he had been accommodated with a change of clothes, 'there is no antidote to

'Picking him out of his shell.'

malaria like the smoke of wood embers ; pine embers.' And he placed himself, with his mouth open, close by the fire.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

Punch, sir, punch : there is no antidote like punch.

MR. CHAINMAIL

Well, Doctor, you shall be indulged. But I shall have my wassail-bowl, nevertheless.

An immense bowl of spiced wine, with roasted apples hissing on its surface, was borne into the hall by four men, followed by an empty bowl of the same dimensions, with all the materials of arrack punch, for the divine's especial brewage. He accinged himself to the task, with his usual heroism, and having finished it to his entire satisfaction, reminded his host to order in the devil.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT

I think, Mr. Chainmail, we can amuse ourselves very well here all night. The enemy may be still excubant : and we had better not disperse till daylight. I am perfectly satisfied with my quarters. Let the young folks go on with their gambols ; let them dance to your old harper's minstrelsy ; and if they please to kiss under the mistletoe, whereof I espy a goodly bunch suspended at the end of the hall, let those who like it not, leave it to those who do. Moreover, if among the more sedate portion of the assembly, which, I foresee, will keep me company, there were any to revive the good old custom of singing after supper, so to fill up the intervals of the dances, the steps of night would move more lightly.

MR. CHAINMAIL

My Susan will set the example, after she has set that of joining in the rustic dance, according to good customs long departed.

After the first dance, in which all classes of the company mingled, the young lady of the mansion took her harp, and following the reverend gentleman's suggestion, sang a song of the twelfth century.

FLORENCE AND BLANCHFLOR[1]

Florence and Blanchflor, loveliest maids,
  Within a summer grove,
Amid the flower-enamelled shades
  Together talked of love.

A clerk sweet Blanchflor's heart had gain'd;
  Fair Florence loved a knight:
And each with ardent voice maintained,
  She loved the worthiest wight.

Sweet Blanchflor praised her scholar dear,
  As courteous, kind, and true;
Fair Florence said her chevalier
  Could every foe subdue.

And Florence scorned the bookworm vain,
  Who sword nor spear could raise;
And Blanchflor scorned the unlettered brain
  Could sing no lady's praise.

From dearest love, the maidens bright
  To deadly hatred fell,
Each turned to shun the other's sight,
  And neither said farewell.

The king of birds, who held his court
  Within that flowery grove,
Sang loudly: 'Twill be rare disport
  To judge this suit of love.'

Before him came the maidens bright,
  With all his birds around,
To judge the cause, if clerk or knight
  In love be worthiest found.

The falcon and the sparrow-hawk
  Stood forward for the fight:
Ready to do, and not to talk,
  They voted for the knight.

And Blanchflor's heart began to fail,
  Till rose the strong-voiced lark,
And, after him, the nightingale,
  And pleaded for the clerk.

[1] Imitated from the Fabliau, *De Florance et de Blanche Flor, alias Jugement d'Amour.*

The nightingale prevailed at length,
Her pleading had such charms;
So eloquence can conquer strength,
And arts can conquer arms.

The lovely Florence tore her hair,
And died upon the place;
And all the birds assembled there,
Bewailed the mournful case.

They piled up leaves and flowerets rare
Above the maiden bright,
And sang: 'Farewell to Florence fair,
Who too well loved her knight.'

Several others of the party sang in the intervals of the dances. Mr. Chainmail handed to Mr. Trillo another ballad of the twelfth century, of a merrier character than the former. Mr. Trillo readily accommodated it with an air, and sang—

THE PRIEST AND THE MULBERRY TREE[1]

Did you hear of the curate who mounted his mare,
And merrily trotted along to the fair?
Of creature more tractable none ever heard;
In the height of her speed she would stop at a word,
And again with a word, when the curate said Hey,
She put forth her mettle, and galloped away.

As near to the gates of the city he rode,
While the sun of September all brilliantly glowed,
The good priest discovered, with eyes of desire,
A mulberry tree in a hedge of wild briar,
On boughs long and lofty, in many a green shoot,
Hung large, black, and glossy, the beautiful fruit.

The curate was hungry, and thirsty to boot;
He shrunk from the thorns, though he longed for the fruit;
With a word he arrested his courser's keen speed,
And he stood up erect on the back of his steed;
On the saddle he stood, while the creature stood still,
And he gathered the fruit, till he took his good fill.

'Sure never,' he thought, 'was a creature so rare,
So docile, so true, as my excellent mare.

[1] Imitated from the Fabliau, *Du Provoire qui mengea des Mûres.*

Lo, here, how I stand' (and he gazed all around),
'As safe and as steady as if on the ground,
Yet how had it been, if some traveller this way,
Had, dreaming no mischief, but chanced to cry Hey?'

He stood with his head in the mulberry tree,
And he spoke out aloud in his fond reverie:
At the sound of the word, the good mare made a push,
And down went the priest in the wild-briar bush.
He remembered too late, on his thorny green bed,
Much that well may be thought, cannot wisely be said.

Lady Clarinda, being prevailed on to take the harp in her turn, sang the following stanzas :—

In the days of old,
Lovers felt true passion,
Deeming years of sorrow
By a smile repaid.
Now the charms of gold,
Spells of pride and fashion,
Bid them say good-morrow
To the best-loved maid.

Through the forests wild,
O'er the mountains lonely,
They were never weary
Honour to pursue:
If the damsel smiled
Once in seven years only,
All their wanderings dreary,
Ample guerdon knew.

Now one day's caprice
Weighs down years of smiling,
Youthful hearts are rovers,
Love is bought and sold:
Fortune's gifts may cease,
Love is less beguiling;
Wiser were the lovers,
In the days of old.

The glance which she threw at the captain, as she sang the last verse, awakened his dormant hopes. Looking round for his rival, he saw that he was not in the hall; and, approaching the lady of his heart, he received one of the sweetest smiles of their earlier days.

After a time, the ladies, and all the females of the party, retired. The males remained on duty with punch and wassail, and dropped off one by one into sweet forgetfulness; so that when the rising sun of December looked through the painted windows on mouldering embers and flickering lamps, the vaulted roof was echoing to a mellifluous concert of noses, from the clarionet of the waiting-boy at one end of the hall, to the double bass of the Reverend Doctor, ringing over the empty punch-bowl, at the other.

CONCLUSION

FROM this eventful night, young Crotchet was seen no more on English mould. Whither he had vanished, was a question that could no more be answered in his case, than in that of King Arthur, after the battle of Camlan. The great firm of Catchflat and Company figured in the *Gazette*, and paid sixpence in the pound; and it was clear that he had shrunk from exhibiting himself on the scene of his former greatness, shorn of the beams of his paper prosperity. Some supposed him to be sleeping among the undiscoverable secrets of some barbel-pool in the Thames; but those who knew him best were more inclined to the opinion that he had gone across the Atlantic, with his pockets full of surplus capital, to join his old acquaintance, Mr. Touchandgo, in the bank of Dotandcarryonetown.

Lady Clarinda was more sorry for her father's disappointment than her own; but she had too much pride to allow herself to be put up a second time in the money-market; and when the captain renewed his assiduities, her old partiality for him, combining with a sense of gratitude for a degree of constancy which she knew she scarcely deserved, induced her, with Lord Foolincourt's hard-wrung consent, to share with him a more humble, but less precarious fortune, than that to which she had been destined as the price of a rotten borough.

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